Imperial Legitimacy

in the Roman Empire of the Third Century:

AD 193 – 337

by

Matthew Kraig Shaw, B.Com., B.A. (Hons), M.Teach.

Submitted in fulfilment of the

requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

University of Tasmania, July 2010

Signed: Mathew Shaw

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis. This thesis does not contain any material that infringes copyright.

Signed: Mathew Shaw

Abstract.

Septimius Severus, according to Cassius Dio, told his sons to enrich the soldiers and look down on all other men (Cass. Dio 77.15.2). This recognised the perceived importance of the army in establishing and maintaining the legitimacy of an emperor. This thesis explores the role of the army in the legitimation of emperors. It also considers whether there were other groups, such as the Senate and people, which emperors needed to consider in order to establish and maintain their position as well as the methods they used to do so. Enriching the soldiers was not the only method used and not the only way an emperor could be successful. The rapid turn over of emperors after Septimius' death, however, suggests that legitimacy was proving difficult to maintain even though all emperors all tried to establish and maintain the legitimacy of their regime.

The concept of legitimate authority is explained in relation to legitimacy theory put forward by Max Weber who was one of the earliest to espouse a theory of legitimacy and remains influential, although his work is not without its critics. There are three principles espoused by Weber which allowed emperors to establish and maintain their legitimacy. These are legally proclaimed authority, traditional authority and charismatic authority. By using these categories, the importance of each type to the emperors and how they sought to use them is discussed and conclusions reached about the importance of the army and other groups in the legitimation process.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Geoffrey Adams and Dr Paul Burton for their supervision and feedback on work that was submitted to them during my candidature. Their suggestions were invaluable and the speed at which they were able to get them back to me was greatly appreciated. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr Paul Gallivan who was my supervisor initially and provided many useful suggestions on the literature I should read and the direction the research should take. I am also grateful to Assoc. Prof Peter Davis for his support, especially in regard to the extra Greek and Latin I was able to do during my candidature.

The other History and Classics post-graduate students helped make my candidature enjoyable with their camaraderie and demeanour and for this I thank them. Michael Berry and Rebekah McWhirter's presence especially helped to make the post-graduate experience a memorable one. The most important fellow post-graduate I would like to acknowledge is Abbie McKay who has been beside me almost every step of the way, providing invaluable support when doing the extra Latin classes and providing a welcome distraction during breaks from tutoring, marking, researching and writing. Finally, I would like to thank those from outside the university – most particularly Chelsea, Tamsyn and Jarrod – for the friendship they have shown.

Contents

Abbreviations

AE	L'Année Epigraphique
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus
Aur. Vict.	Aurelius Victor
Caes.	The Book about the Caesars
BMC	Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum
Cass. Dio	Cassius Dio
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
Cyprian	Cyprian
Ep.	Epistles
Digest	The Digest of Justinian
Ephem. Epig	*Ephemeris Epigraphica*
Euseb.	Eusebius
Vit. Const.	The Life of Constantine
Eutr.	Eutropius
HA	*Historia Augusta*

Alex. Sev.	Severus Alexander
Aurel.	Aurelian
Carus	Carus, Carinus and Numerianus
Comm.	Commodus
Did. Iul.	Didius Julianus
Gall.	Gallienus
Gord.	The Gordians
Marc.	Marcus Aurelius
Max.	Maximinus Thrax
Prob.	Probus
Sev.	Septimius Severus
Tac.	Tacitus
Tyr. Trig.	The Thirty Tyrants
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
IRT	Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania
Herodian	Aelius Herodianus

Lactant.	Lactantius
Mort. Pers.	On the Deaths of the Persecutors
Pan. Lat.	The Latin Panegyrics
Polyb.	Polybius
Plut.	Plutarch
Caes.	Caesar
Num.	Numa
Sull.	Sulla
RG	The Deeds of the Divine Augustus
RIC	Roman Imperial Coinage
Suet.	Suetonius
Aug.	Augustus
Ner.	Nero
Tac.	Tacitus
Hist.	The Histories
Zonar.	Zonaras

Zos. Zosimus

Introduction:

This thesis will explore how Roman emperors during the third century sought to legitimate their regimes and maintain this legitimacy. The sources of political legitimacy, as espoused by Max Weber's work on the subject, are traditional authority, legal authority and charismatic authority. Regimes can be considered legitimate on any one of these three grounds.[1] Dio claims Septimius told his sons to ὁμονοεῖτε, τοὺς στρατιώτας πλουτίζετε, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων καταφρονεῖτε (Cass. Dio 77.15.2)[2] as this was the way he believed that they could legitimate their regime and maintain their legitimacy. Enriching the soldiers alone, however, was not sufficient for a regime to gain and maintain its legitimacy and this thesis has discussed that, although enriching the soldiers was an essential part of the emperor's role, there were other factors which were important. Therefore, the role of the army and the role of enriching the soldiery in the legitimation process, in regard to the three bases of legitimate authority which Weber espoused has been considered. The roles of the other factors, such as the people, the Senate and the actions of the emperor, have also been considered in relation to these bases. These categories of legitimation allow the attempts of the emperors to establish and maintain their legitimacy to be assessed.

Emperors needed to be regarded as legitimate in order to establish themselves in power. The ways they did this and the groups from which they sought legitimacy

[1] M. Weber and S.N. Eisenstadt. *On Charisma and Institution Building*. (Chicago, 1968), p. 46.

[2] 'Be harmonious, enrich the soldiers and look down on all other men'

have been explored, as were which methods worked and which did not and for whom. The reasons that certain methods worked for some but not for others has also been explored. Conclusions have been drawn from non-literary as well as the literary evidence that survives, such as coinage, which shows how these men tried to represent themselves and legitimise their regimes. The reliability and value of the relevant ancient literature was considered when investigating these emperors. The various emperors and their regimes are not uniformly represented within the sources, however, because the opinion that the author held of these men colour how they are depicted within the texts, as does the reliability of the sources which the surviving literature itself used.[3]

Weber's work is the starting point for many of the works on theories of legitimacy.[4] Weber is important because he was one of the most important social thinkers at the beginning of the twentieth century and was renowned in Germany during his lifetime. He provides a framework for understanding legitimacy[5] but

[3] The *Historia Augusta*, for example is not regarded as a reliable source (E.J. Kenny, *Latin Literature*, (Cambridge, 1982), p. 725) yet it is the source with the most detail for the post-Severan period as both Dio and Herodian are no longer writing about events by this time. Dio did not like Caracalla (for example Dio 77.14.1) or Elagabalus (for example see 80.17.1) and the *Historia Augusta* is negative towards Gallienus (*HA Gall.* 4.3). The *Historia Augusta*, however, is highly complimentary about Claudius Gothicus (*HA Claud.* 2.1-2) while Herodian presents a largely positive view of Severus Alexander (Herodian 6.9.8).

[4] Weber and Eisenstadt (1968), pp. xii-xiii. D. Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (London, 1991), p. 8 and I.L Horowitz, 'The Norm of Illegitimacy – Ten Years Later' in B. Denitch, ed., *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis* (London, 1979), p. 23. Also W. Connelly, 'Introduction: Legitimacy and Modernity' in W.Connelly (ed.), *Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford, 1994), p. 8.

[5] J.G. Merquior, *Rousseau and Weber: Two Studies in the theory of Legitimacy*. (London, 1980), p. 207.

not a blueprint for a perfect society.[6] His framework proposes the possibility of developing an intelligible conceptual theory which makes history understandable.[7] Consequently, using his theory rather than an abstract one not concerned with historical comparison will produce understanding on evidence rather than abstract ideas.[8]

After the second world war his influence also spread throughout the western world.[9] The scholar most responsible for Weber's influence extending outside Germany is Talcott Parsons and his analysis of Weber's concepts have been influential on modern sociology.[10] Other scholars, such as Lipset, Schaar, Habermas, are all influenced by Weber even though their theories diverge from his.[11] A great strength of Weber is that his empirical contributions to sociology have been unparalleled in any era.[12] He wanted his work to be able to illuminate specific historical circumstances[13] and this is the reason Weber's theory is appropriate when considering third century Rome.

---

[6] V. Murvar, 'Introduction: theory of liberty, legitimacy and power: new directions in the intellectual and scientific legacy of Max Weber'. In V. Murvar (ed.), *Theory of Liberty, Legitimacy and Power: New Directions in the Intellectual and Scientific Legacy of Max Weber*, (London, 1985a), p. 4.

[7] Murvar (1985a), p. 4.

[8] Murvar (1985a), p. 4.

[9] W. Heydebrand, 'Introduction' in M. Weber, *Sociological Writings*, edited by W. Heydebrand, (New York, 1994), p. vii.

[10] P. Hamilton, *Max Weber: Critical Assessments, Volume 1*, (London, 1991), p. 7.

[11] Connelly (1994), p. 8.

[12] J. Rex, *Discovering Sociology: Studies in Sociological Theory and Method*, (London, 1973), p. 124.

[13] Rex (1973), p. 126.

The views Weber espoused on politics remain valid in spite of changing times which means his theories are transferable across generations and this also makes it possible to discuss the Roman world using his legitimacy theory.[14] He anticipated empirical testing of his theory by looking at evidence from history and the contemporary world.[15] It was his view that the three types of legitimacy which he proposed could help to explain the relationship between those in positions of power and those subject to them.[16] Therefore, this thesis has analysed the evidence from the third century in relation to Weber's three types of legitimacy[17] and this is the reason for doing so. The characteristics of his work, therefore, need to be considered. Weber believes that it is because claims to legitimacy are based on rational grounds that regimes are able to establish their legitimacy if they can prove themselves to be effective. He was concerned with the process of legitimation and the ways which regimes were able to dominate those subject to it and maintain their legitimacy.[18] The regimes of the third century had problems establishing and maintaining their legitimacy which is why using Weber's theory of legitimacy is relevant and the evidence from the time can establish the effectiveness of the various regimes during the period.

---

[14] N. Yamawaki, 'Rethinking Weber's Ideal Types' in L. McFalls (ed.), *Max Weber's 'Objectivity' Reconsidered*, (Toronto, 2007), pp. 216-217. Weber's political theories relate to power politics which Yamawaki argues is relevant to a conflict-ridden world rather than one seeking to understand other cultures (p. 217). Conflict was, however, a regular feature of life in the Roman empire and the supremacy of Rome undeniable to those ruling the empire.

[15] V. Murvar, 'Patrimonialism, modern and traditionalist: a paradigm for interdisciplinary research on rulership and legitimacy. In V. Murvar (ed.), *Theory of Liberty, Legitimacy and Power: New Directions in the Intellectual and Scientific Legacy of Max Weber*, (London, 1985b), pp. 40-41.

[16] R. Bendix and B.S. Turner, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*. (London, 1998), p. 300.

[17] Murvar (1985b), p. 41.

[18] Murvar (1985b), p. 41.

The three principles which Weber identified that allow regimes to acquire this effectiveness are; (1) tradition, (2) a positive proclamation, the legality of which is beyond question because it has been (a) agreed to voluntarily by all those concerned, or (b) imposed by some group over the others on the basis of their being perceived to be a legitimate authority and therefore able to claim obedience, or (3) the personal charisma of the leader. Legitimacy in regard to this final criterion rests upon the devotion to a specific person; in the case of Rome, this is the emperor.[19] Since these factors allow a regime to rule effectively, they serve to foster a belief in those subject to it in its legitimacy. Consequently, those in power can be considered legitimate because they are regarded to be so.[20] This is important because regimes which are not legitimate do not have the people over which they are trying to rule acquise to their commands.[21]

For Weber, tradition was a belief in the acceptance of the ways which had existed in a society throughout generations and those exercising authority did so on the basis that they had the right to do so provided that they are bound by such traditions.[22] The people who obeyed their commands, therefore, accepted their

[19] M. Weber, *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, translated and introduced by H. P. Secher (London, 1962), pp. 81-83. Also see M. Ciacci, 'Legitimacy and the Problems of Goverance' in A. Moulakis, ed., *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982* (New York, 1986), p. 22. Weber emphasised that the categories were not descriptive categories but sociological tools and that the belief that sustains legitimacy was not simply defined or constructed.

[20] M. Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Tubingen, 1958), p. 493.

[21] M. Weber, D.S Owen, T.B. Strong and R. Livingstone, *The Vocation Lectures*, (Indianapolis, 2004), p. 34.

[22] M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C.

right of command and were obedient to the person occupying the traditionally authoritative position.[23] In Rome, the on-going presence of an emperor meant that his position was one of traditional authority. He was a man from a Senatorial background who was expected to administer the empire and ensure its security. He was also responsible for ensuring that the law was adhered to and the gods respected. His Senatorial background ensured that he was adhering to an even longer tradition of this class of men providing the political, military, judicial and religious leaders of Roman society and having the *auctoritas* and *imperium* with which to fulfill each of these roles. The role of men of Senatorial class, therefore, is consistent with the powers which they were designated in accordance with traditional rules and their rules are obeyed as a result of their traditional status.[24]

As is the case with all models, however, different scholars have different perspectives about its worth. There are criticisms of Weber and these have been explored in more detail in the next chapter. Weber is criticised for ignoring the moral qualities or foundations of a regime,[25] which means that tyrannical regimes can be regarded as legitimate.[26] However, as some tyrannical regimes are recognised as such, any theories exploring legitimacy must take these into account. Critics, such as Beetham, also question the aspects of legitimacy which

---

Wittich (New York, 1968), p. 215.

[23] Weber (1968), pp. 215-216.

[24] Weber (1968), p. 226.

[25] See R. Grafstein, 'The Failure of Weber's Concept of Legitimacy', *Journal of Politics*, 43 (1981), p. 456 and K. Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, (Oxford, 1980), p. 109 for examples of such criticism.

[26] R. Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford, 1990), p. 25.

Weber identified and whether it is valid to consider them in such a way.[27] There is also criticism for the failure to include a measure which is associated with the values or policies that the regime espouses.[28] The absence of this measure is understandable since regimes which fail to gain acceptance for their policies risk being de-legitimated anyway and, consequently, it does not need to be included. The aim of any regime should be to bolster the belief in it rather than merely to maintain its initial support base in case it alienates a part of it and suffers delegitimation. For Weber, whether or not the commands a regime issues are obeyed indicates that the command is perceived to be valid.[29] There has to be a two-way relationship between the ruler and the ruled because those who are subordinate need to believe that those who are dominant have the right to exercise authority.[30]

Ancient Sources

The mid-third century is a period that is not well served by ancient source material. Cassius Dio's history terminates during the reign of Severus Alexander and Herodian's imperial biographies stop with the deaths of Balbinus and Maximus Pupianus in 238. This means that they cover all or most of the Severan era and they are the best literary sources for this period. They do, however, both have weaknesses that need to be considered when drawing conclusions from the

[27] Beetham (1991), p. 24.

[28] Barker (1990), p. 38.

[29] Weber (1968), p. 946.

[30] Weber (1962), p. 20. Also see Beetham (1991), p. 18. He believes that the expression of this belief needs to be explicit through, for example, acclamation, swearing allegiance or voting in elections. This means that the subordinate are contributing to legitimacy.

material contained within them.[31] Dio's chronology is not always correct and he sometimes contradicts himself as a result.[32] For example, he stated that Diadumenianus was made πρόκριτος τῆς νεότητος (*princeps iuventutis*) and Καῖσαρ (*Caesar*) by the Senate (Cass. Dio 78.17.1) but later stated that he was named Καῖσαρ (*Caesar*) by the troops (Cass. Dio 78.19.1) and places this declaration at the time when Macrinus was passing through Zeugma on his expedition against Parthia (Cass. Dio 78.40.1). He is also influenced by his dislike of Caracalla and Elagabalus so that his representations of both of these men need to take this into account.[33] He is an important source, however, and his account of Macrinus' reign is valuable in that he provides an insight into Roman affairs and thoughts at the time the new emperor was away in the east.[34]

Herodian also, on occasion, witnessed the events he describes but there are errors in his work which someone witnessing the events being described should not have made, such as the conflation of the two Parthian campaigns that Septimius undertook.[35] He claims ἐγὼ δ' ἱστορίαν οὐ παρ' ἄλλων παραδεξάμενος ἄγνωστόν τε καὶ ἀμάρτυρον (Herodian 1.1.3), but never cites the sources of his information so that this statement cannot be critically assessed.[36] Although Herodian is vague

[31] For examples see F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford, 1964), p. 163 for Dio and T.D. Barnes, *The Sources of the Historia Augusta* (Brussels, 1978), pp. 82-83 for Herodian. Barnes also investigates the veracity of the *Historia Augusta* in detail throughout.

[32] R. Syme, 'The Son of the Emperor Macrinus'. *Phoenix*. Vol. 26, No. 3. Autumn, 1972, p. 277.

[33] P. Southern, *The Roman Empire From Severus to Constantine* (London, 2001), p. 51 for Caracalla and Millar (1964), p. 169 for Macrinus.

[34] Southern (2001), p. 55.

[35] Barnes (1978), pp. 82-83.

[36] Barnes (1978), p. 83.

and imprecise at times, it is not necessarily the case that he is always inferior to Dio and the two works can be compared and contrasted to gain greater insight into events.[37]

The weaknesses of the *Historia Augusta* also need to be taken into account and there is much scholarship – most particularly by Barnes[38] and Syme[39] – on the failings, and occasional strengths, of this work. It does contain some good information although this is amongst other details which are not reliable.[40] Nor, unlike Herodian and Dio, was it contemporary to the events it describes and so the author was reliant on written sources for his information.[41] The exact sources that were used cannot easily be discovered which makes their reliability open to debate and in spite of its own claims, it is likely to have been written some time in the second half of the fourth century.[42] Therefore, the *Historia Augusta* must be used with caution as a source and independent corroboration is helpful when drawing conclusions that rely on this work. It does have some similarities to Dio and Herodian at times, but also diverges from them. It is not necessarily always

[37] Barnes (1978), p. 84.

[38] Barnes (1978) is his main work which considers the sources which the *Historia Augusta* drew upon and what this means about its veracity for modern scholarship.

[39] R. Syme, *Historia Augusta Papers* (Oxford, 1983) is his book which raises issues about the reliability and otherwise of the *Historia Augusta*.

[40] Barnes (1978), p. 89.

[41] Syme (1983), pp. 12-13.

[42] See Barnes (1978), pp. 15-16, 17-19 and also pp. 77-78 for a discussion about why it cannot have been written during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine as it claims. Barnes, as well as hypothesising that due to linguistic idiosyncrasies, literary quirks and interests, intellectual attitudes, and social and political opinions that it was the work of a single author rather than the six which it claims to be, says that it is easy to establish that the date of composition must be after 360 because of the author's knowledge of Victor, among others, who was writing after this time.

the case that this divergence makes it inferior to the two Greek authors on every occasion and this will be due to the source of information that its author was consulting for that particular time.[43] It is one of the few sources for the period after Dio's and Herodian's accounts end (although with periodic gaps) so it must be used, however cautiously. The epitomisers Zosimus, Eutropius, Festus and Aurelius Victor also provide overviews of this era, but offer little of substance.

The *Historia Augusta* ceases prior to Diocletian, leaving the epitomisers to continue their brief discussions of Diocletian and his successors. There are also a number of panegyrics, the *Panegyrici Latini*, from which evidence can be drawn not only for Diocletian but also his immediate successor, while Lactantius and Eusebius also provide some information for this period. Their texts need to be treated carefully because they are Christian authors and have very different perspectives from the other, pagan, authors.[44] One advantage which the *Panegyrici Latini* have is that they have not been altered after they were finalised to make them more acceptable to new regimes that came in.[45] For example, Maximian's representation in the panegyrics is not altered later after he turned from ally to a foe of Constantine once Constantine had defeated Maxentius and later Licinius to establish his own power and legitimate right to rule.[46] Nor is there

[43] Barnes (1978), p. 89. He believes that the *Historia Augusta* must have been drawing on a Latin source or sources for the early third century which described the same period as the two Greek writers. There is, however, no reason that they could not have again been Greek sources. That they do not survive does make the assessment of their reliability more difficult.

[44] A. Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430*. (London, 1993), pp. 15-18.

[45] C.E.V Nixon and B.S Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 33-34.

[46] C.E.V Nixon, 'Latin Panegyric in the Tetrarchic and Constantinian Period,' in B. Croke and

a consistent version of Constantine's march on Italy to fight Maxentius within the panegyrics of 313 and 321. This was not the case with other sources, such as Eusebius whose *Ecclesiastical History* which was revised regularly as the political circumstances changed.[47]

Legitimacy in Rome during the Severan Dynasty

Regimes need legitimacy in order to ensure that they are the established and unchallenged sources of authority within a state,[48] which allows them to govern effectively and ensure that there is sufficient compliance from the populace with their commands. Those regimes which are not considered to have the legitimate right to rule, in contrast, face challenges from one or more of the various elements that make up a society, generally the aristocracy or elite, the military and the masses.[49] There are many different issues that modern social science identifies as defining what it means for a regime to be legitimate.[50]

Just as there are a broad range of governmental styles from the autocratic to the democratic, so there are also numerous variations on the theories and definitions

A.M. Emmett, eds., *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney, 1983), pp. 95-96. There is no attempt, for example, to play Constantine up and Maximian down throughout the series of panegyrics in which Maximian is represented in 289, 291, 307 and 310.

[47] Nixon (1983), pp. 95-96.

[48] C. Kadushin, 'Power Circles and Legitimacy in Developed Societies' in B. Denitch, ed., *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis* (London, 1979), p. 132.

[49] Beetham (1991), p. 139 states that disorder and insecurity can be either a product of inadequate legitimacy or a cause. The disorder that results prior to a regime becoming legitimate is a product of its illegitimacy, whereas any disorder subsequent to a regime acquiring legitimacy can cause the regime to be delegitimised.

[50] Barker (1990), p. 21.

of legitimation.[51] This means that not all scholars can agree about what types of regime can achieve legitimacy. Beetham, for example, does not acknowledge that a regime established by a military coup can ever achieve legitimacy.[52] In Rome, to dismiss regimes that began in this way is to question whether legitimacy is actually achievable in the Roman world. However, legitimacy was achievable. Emperors, such as Septimius Severus and Diocletian, were able to govern and govern effectively. The people of Rome were sovereign and consequently the level of support enjoyed within the populace allows the legitimation, de-legitimation or illegitimacy of emperors to be evaluated. Therefore, a theoretical framework which applies to the Roman Empire needs to be able to explain how regimes came to be accepted as legitimate, even in the cases where their provenance was in a military coup. This framework, therefore, allows the success or failure of regimes to become established and legitimised to be assessed and explained.

[51] Barker (1990), p. 21. Whether there can be said to be a distinct form of legitimacy that can be described as political is something that is debated, but Barker (1990), pp. 98-99 believes that it does exist and conceptualises the relationship between the rulers and the ruled.

[52] Beetham (1991), pp. 233-240. Beetham is discussing the coup as having replaced a democratic regime and the military, consequently, as not having a role in the governing of the state prior to its intervention. He believes that military regimes have neither an authoritative source for their power or any form of popular consent. This was not always the case in Rome, however, as military men who were declared emperor would normally seek Senatorial approval for their assumption of power and, therefore, give the Senate a role as an authorising source in such matters. Emperors, regardless of how they came to power, would often seek popular consent. Beetham (1991), p. 21 believes that his criteria for legitimacy are sufficient to describe legitimacy in all historical societies, past and present. However, by claiming that regimes cannot achieve legitimacy if they come to power through a military coup, he is decrying the legitimacy of many of the Roman emperors, who, in their time were accepted and established as the rulers of the Roman people in spite of having started the process of their legitimation as a usurping regime. R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 547-548.

The approach taken to consider the legitimacy of regimes during the third century has been undertaken in Chapter One by considering the theory associated with the legitimacy of regimes. In Chapter Two, the nature of the proclamation which allowed an emperor to take power and be legally in the position has been investigated. Chapter Three has looked at the traditional expectations of the emperor, with the charismatic nature of legitimacy investigated in Chapter Four. The performance of the emperors during the period from Septimius until the death of Constantine has been considered in relation to these legitimating factors where there is sufficient evidence to draw conclusions as to whether individual emperors met these expectations and whether there were any changes to either the expectations or the methods used to meet them during the course of the troubled middle of the third century. The emperors during this time, such as Gallienus, generally did their best to keep the empire together and to secure their power, but it was not until Diocletian and his foundation of the tetrarchy, and then the Constantinian line which followed, that the imperial position was stabilised.

Chapter 1: Weber's Theories of Legitimacy and their Application

The proclamation of an emperor had to occur through a legal source and obedience had to be owed to this source. To carry the weight of legality it needed to be an impersonal order which was legally established.[1] The Roman Senate consisted of former holders of offices on the *cursus honorum*. Each member, therefore, had at one point held the legal authority to act in some way for the Roman state. Consequently it was a body of great tradition and importance and it would give its approval for a new emperor and could also declare emperors who were failing to be *hostes*, enemies of the state.[2]

The Roman army too was an impersonal order and was the legal, military arm of the state.[3] Its authority to make such proclamations of legitimacy or to withdraw its support for an emperor did not have a legal basis but there was no question that it was able to claim obedience from the people and the Senate (Cass. Dio 57.24.5).[4] That the military had this obedience from the Senate meant that it effectively had the body which traditionally made such proclamations under its control. The army's own proclamations eventually came to carry so much more

[1] M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968), pp. 215-216.

[2] Maximinus Thrax is an example of an emperor who was declared *hostes* (*HA Max.* 15.2), while the majority of third century emperors were acclaimed by the Senate.

[3] J.B. Campbell. *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 BC – AD 235*. (Oxford, 1984), p. 182.

[4] Tiberius, for example, gave the Senate an example of power of the Praetorian Guard in order to show where power lay in the state. ἐν δ' οὖν τῷ τότε ὁ Τιβέριος τὴν τοῦ δορυφορικοῦ γυμνασίαν τοῖς βουλευταῖς, ὥσπερ ἀγνοοῦσι τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῶν, ἐπέδειξεν, ὅπως καὶ πολλούς σφας καὶ ἐρρωμένους ἰδόντες μᾶλλον αὐτὸν φοβῶνται.

weight that newly appointed emperors did not even bother to seek Senatorial approval for the position.[5] The declining importance of the Senate is one of the issues that has been considered when the proclamation of legal legitimacy is considered.

Acceptance through a proclamation from either the army or the Senate – preferably both – enhanced the legitimacy of any regime. This has been discussed more fully at a later point in this thesis. The Senate believed that it had the power to anoint emperors, but it was usually the legions who appointed them.[6] The role and importance of both has been considered when determining how a regime tried to legitimate itself as has whether these groups declined as a legitimating authority at various times. Tacitus observed that the backing of the army was the secret to gaining and maintaining power (Tac. *Hist*, 1.4-5),[7] but the Senate still had a role to play in the maintenance of stable rule within the empire or, at any rate, believed that it did.

[5] Macrinus was an example of an emperor who acted based on the army's proclamation rather than wait until he was invested by the Senate (Dio 79.16.2). The appointment of the child, Gordian III, also shows the power which soldiers could have over the Senate since they helped to instigate his promotion in league with the Senatorial appointees, Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus (Herodian 7.10.6-9). There is no mention at all in the sources of Carus seeking acknowledgement of his position by the Senate even after his proclamation by the troops. See Zos. 1.71 and Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 38.

[6] In the period under discussion, Septimius Severus provides an example. He became emperor when the troops acclaimed him as such (*HA Sev* 5.1) and was later named as emperor by the Senate when he was closing in on Rome with his army (Dio 74.17.4).

[7] evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri.

Charismatic legitimacy is focused on the individual rather than the office which the individual holds.[8] Emperors, therefore, needed to be seen as having exemplary characteristics. These included martial success and relationships with the divine,[9] which meant that they were obeyed because of the trust which the people had in them.[10] Maximinus Thrax was acclaimed by the troops because of his heroic abilities (Herodian 7.1.6)[11] but once these were shown to be fallible the charismatic nature of the legitimacy which he had was destroyed and his overthrow soon followed (Herodian 8.5.3-9).[12] Victory titles were a means of promoting martial success since they incorporated the vanquished opponent's name into that of the victorious emperor, whilst other charismatic virtues such as a religious aura can be seen in the promotion of the emperor as increasingly removed from the people. This culminated with Aurelian being considered to be *dominus et deus* and the obeisance which was shown at the court of Diocletian.[13]

---

[8] Weber (1968), p. 215.

[9] C. Noreña, 'The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91 (2001), p. 146.

[10] Weber (1968), pp. 215-216.

[11] Μαξιμῖνος ἔμελλεν ἐπὶ Γερμανοὺς διαβήσεσθαι· ἅμα γὰρ τῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν παραλαβεῖν εὐθέως πολεμικῶν ἔργων ἤρξατο, καὶ διὰ σώματος μέγεθος καὶ ἰσχὺν [στρατιωτικὴν] καὶ ἐμπειρίαν πολεμικὴν δοκῶν ἐπιλελέχθαι ἔργοις τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τῶν στρατιωτῶν ὑπόληψιν ἐπιστοῦτο

[12] ἐφ' αἷς ἐκεῖνος κενούμενος ὀργῆς μᾶλλον ἐνεπίμπλατο. χρῆσθαι δὲ κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων οὐ δυνάμενος, ἐκόλαζε τοὺς πλείστους τῶν ἡγουμένων τῶν ἰδίων στρατιωτῶν ὡς ἀνάνδρως καὶ ῥᾳθύμως προσφερομένους τῇ τειχομαχίᾳ. ὅθεν αὐτῷ περιεγένετο πρὸς μὲν τῶν οἰκείων μῖσός τε καὶ ὀργή, παρὰ δὲ τῶν ἀντιπάλων πλείων ἡ καταφρόνησις. συνέβαινε δὲ τοῖς Ἀκυλησίοις πάντα ὑπάρχειν ἔκπλεα καὶ ἐπιτηδείων ἀφθονίαν, ἐκ πολλῆς παρασκευῆς ἐς τὴν πόλιν πάντων σεσωρευμένων ὅσα ἦν ἀνθρώποις καὶ κτήνεσιν ἐς τροφὰς καὶ ποτὰ ἐπιτήδεια· ὁ δὲ στρατὸς πάντων <ἦν> ἐν σπάνει, τῶν τε καρποφόρων δένδρων ἐκκεκομμένων καὶ τῆς γῆς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ δεδῃωμένης.

[13] RIC V.1 Aurelian 305 has the legend IMP DEO ET DOMINO AURELIANO AVG

Charisma could be an important element in an emperor's legitimation because it was the quality which allows an individual to exercise authority and influence over other people. This charisma was necessary to impress all elements of Roman society, not just the general populace, and could draw attention to the emperor and his achievements in the form of triumphs or victory titles which proclaimed the successes that the emperor enjoyed over the enemies of Rome.[14] This is the category that can explain incidences of legitimacy that do not fit into either of the traditional or legal categories.[15] Legitimacy is a fluid concept that can change over time and it can be either gained or lost.[16] Consequently, it is possible for new

[14] The full name of Diocletian on the edict on maximum prices, for example, was Imp(erator) Caesar C. Aurel(ius) Val(erius) Diocletian]us P(ius) F(elix) Inv(ictus) Aug(ustus), p[o]nt(ifex) max(imus), Germ(anicus) max(imus) VI, Sarm(aticus) max(imus) IIII, Persic(us) max(imus) II, Britt(anicus) max(imus), Carpic(us) max(imus), Armen(icus) max(imus), Medic(us) max(imus), Adiabenic(us) max(imus), trib(unicia) p(otestate) XVIII, coss(ul) VII, Imp(erator) XVIII, p(ater) p(atriae), procoss(ul) shows the extent to which promoting ones positions, successes in battle and religious qualities could be taken. See S. Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedickt*, (Berlin, 1971), p. 90ff for this reference to Diocletian and the text of the price edict.

[15] P. Weber-Schäfer 'Divine Descent and Sovereign Rule: A Case of Legitimacy? in A. Moulakis, ed., *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982* (New York, 1986), pp. 90-91.

[16] F. Ferrarotti, 'Legitimacy, Hegemony and Domination: Gramsci – With and Versus Lenin', in B. Denitch, ed., *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis* (London, 1979), p. 105. Also see S. Treggiari, 'Divorce Roman Style: How Easy and How Frequent Was It?' in B. Rawson, ed., *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome* (Canberra, 1991), p. 33, who is discussing the Digest 39.5.31pr. The concept of legitimacy could change in the Roman world and this can be seen in the nature of Roman relationships. It was possible for a couple to transform their relationship from one of concubinage to marriage merely by changing their attitude. Therefore, they were able to transform their relationship into one into which legitimate children can be born. This was not the case whilst their relationship was merely one of concubinage. The ability of freedmen upon manumission to legitimate children that had been illegitimate up to that point also shows that the concept of legitimacy was not a fixed idea in the Roman world and law (P.R.C. Weaver, 'The Status of Children in Mixed Marriages,' in B. Rawson, ed., *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives* (London, 1986), p. 161). Conclusions about legitimacy in the

crises to occur that allow another leader to come in and take command who would then be required to go through the process of legitimation himself.[17] The overthrow of Severus Alexander and the appointment of Maximinus Thrax is one example of this (Herodian 6.7.9-7.1.6).

The traditional nature of the position of emperor meant that the reverence in which the position was held allowed for the continued survival of the empire through periods of internal upheaval and external pressure. This survival was also a testament to the ability of its institutions, which created a suitably universal idea throughout its vast landmass of what it meant to be part of the empire.[18] According to Ammianus, it was Rome's glory that guaranteed the respect of those throughout the empire for the Senate and the Roman people (Amm. Mar. 14.6.6).[19] The Caesars for their part were required to act in a manner that befitted the dignity of the imperial office, as it had been entrusted to their management, (Amm. Mar. 14.6.5)[20] and any loyalty showed to them was primarily an

---

Roman family can be used to draw conclusions for the status of an emperor because in imperial Rome the emperor was indeed the ultimate father, the *pater patriae*. In terms of political theory, Polyb. (6.4) states that when one man rule develops and corrects its defects, it can then be considered to be kingship, which is the superior version of one man rule, showing that the nature of an office was also considered to change over time.

[17] M. Weber, *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, translated and introduced by H. P. Secher (London, 1962), pp. 20-21.

[18] C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 40-41.

[19] per omnes tamen quotquot sunt partes terrarum, ut domina suscipitur et regina et ubique patrum reverenda cum auctoritate canities populique Romani nomen circumspectum et verecundum.

[20] ideo urbs venerabilis post superbas efferatarum gentium cervices oppressas latasque leges fundamenta libertatis et retinacula sempiterna velut frugi parens et prudens et dives Caesaribus tamquam liberis suis regenda patrimonii iura permisit.

expression of loyalty to the Roman state.[21] The Roman government advertised the history of the empire and the common political ideology as something that it shared with those subject to it, with the emperor being the one constant upon which expressions of this ideology could concentrate.[22]

This means that there can be a distinction made between the loyalty to the office of the emperor and to the person of specific emperors. During the third century the failures of emperors in battle was taken to indicate the unworthiness of that particular man rather than the imperial system *per se*, with there being no suggestion that anyone within the empire wanted to change this. Indeed, the keen competition to become emperor can be seen to enhance the legitimacy of the system and the position as the competitors were seeking to operate within this system rather than searching for alternate methods of governing.[23] By this time, well over two centuries had elapsed since Augustus had won possession of the Roman state and so the position had become entrenched. Therefore, the passage of time and the nature of the imperial position itself helped to enhance the legitimacy of those who were raised to it. Not every usurper that was declared emperor, however, was automatically legitimised by their declaration, so other factors do need to be taken into account in conjunction with the traditional element of legitimation.

---

[21] S.K. Drummond and L.H. Nelson, *The Western Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, (New York, 1994), p. 197.

[22] Ando (2000), p. 23.

[23] Ando (2000), p. 45. See also D. Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (London, 1991), p. 145. It is generally the failings of the regime itself rather than the political system of the state that causes delegitimation.

An example of a usurper who was never a legitimate emperor is Carausius since he was not acknowledged outside of Britain by the other emperors or the wider army. Carausius *rebellaret* (Eutr. 9.21-22). He is also described as a *pirata* in a panegyric to Maximian (*Pan. Lat.* 10.12.1-2), although he is not mentioned by name. This was a standard practice with usurpers,[24] with Diocletian and Maximian at best tolerating his rule which is alluded to by Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 39.39).[25] The campaign by Constantius against Carausius' successor, Allectus, shows that affairs in Britain were not to the satisfaction of the imperial college and the ongoing desire to remove the self-proclaimed emperor there shows that the members of the recognised imperial college did consider them no more than usurpers. The eighth of the *Panegyrici Latini*, for example, celebrates Constantius' eventual success in reclaiming the island and returning it to imperial rule so not recognising the regime which had been ruling there (*Pan. Lat.* 8(5).13.1-18.4).

A usurper would need to prove himself successful in order to be proclaimed by the whole of the army or by the Senate and, consequently, legitimacy was not something that was acquired at the moment of the acclamation. Considering Weber's criteria for legitimation in regard to such a proclamation, it was not necessary for an emperor to receive this from all of the different elements that

[24] C.E.V Nixon and B.S Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 72, n. 42.

[25] *solique Carausio remissum insulae imperium.*

made up Roman society.[26] Although this was desirable, he merely needed sufficient support from the strongest elements of the society.[27]

The Senate had the legitimate authority to confirm the emperor's *imperium*. The army was also a source of legitimate authority, as it too represented Roman power, albeit by virtue of its martial nature rather than the traditional pre-eminence enjoyed by the Senate through its long-established role as an advisory council made up of the wealthy men of Roman society who had held magistracies. Both these groups believed that it was their unanimous acclamation that was required to select an emperor[28] and it was one or the other that did select them.

According to Dio, Septimius, in his advice to Geta and Caracalla, was unequivocal that the army was the agent of legitimation (Dio 77.15.2). However, events through the third century showed that the Senate still had a role to play although this did diminish throughout the century before becoming negligible. Initially, however, to achieve legitimacy, an emperor needed the support of both. Only then would they be shown obedience and not be threatened – however

[26] M. Weber. *Sociological Writings*. (New York, 1994a), p. 11. It could be imposed by those who were able to claim the obedience of the other groups.

[27] Ando (2000), pp. 25-26. An example of a usurper how managed to become a legitimate emperor through his acceptance by the strongest sections of Roman society is Septimius Severus. He was initially a usurper when proclaimed by his troops with Didius Julianus in power but he was then legitimated through his acceptance by the Senate. However, he did not have the universal backing of the army. He was not able to achieve this until he had dealt with the other contenders for the empire. See Dio 74.14.3-77.17.4 for the evidence of Septimius' rise to power.

[28] Ando (2000), p. 30.

temporarily (for some were quickly de-legitimised) – by the possibility of one of these groups establishing a rival for his position.[29]

Because imperial power is, by nature, arbitrary, it was important that the new regime did not draw attention to this fact. To do so, opponents who were not part of the former regime were vilified as brigands and public enemies rather than being labelled as usurpers.[30] This was because an emperor could never acknowledge the possibility that he once might have had a similarly uncertain foundation to his regime that those attempting to usurp his position enjoyed upon their attempted assumption of power.[31] It was necessary for there to be a show of legality. Augustus, for example, apparently claimed that he was prepared to lay aside his power and allow Rome to revert to its Republican form (Cass. Dio 53.4) which in turn led to him receiving power from the Senate rather than taking it for himself (Cass. Dio 53.11-12). This showed respect for the institutions and laws which preceded him and allowed there to be the illusion of continuity.[32] Once a new regime had allied itself with those who had military power in order to alleviate the possibility of being challenged, it would then seek to secure support

[29] Beetham (1991, p. 209) defines delegitimation to be 'a process whereby those whose consent is necessary to the legitimation of government act in a manner that indicates their withdrawal of consent' and this withdrawal needs to be widely known (p. 210). Examples are mass demonstrations, strikes and acts of civil disobedience, which can damage the ability of a regime to rule.

[30] Nixon and Rodgers (1994), p. 25.

[31] Ando (2000), p. 30.

[32] R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), p. 408.

throughout the populace and use the allies it had to help promote its legitimacy with these other groups.[33]

Weber does not pass judgement upon whether a particular political system is desirable or not, as he believes the desire to legitimate itself is the aim that any kind of regime tries to achieve.[34] Barker praises Weber's theory for describing conduct and for using a concept of legitimacy that explains the ability of the state or a regime to rule rather than explaining or justifying the obedience of those subject to it, so giving an understanding of how regimes justify their power to themselves.[35] Mention should be made, however, that not everyone believes that Weber's model should be accepted and looking at some criticisms can then be used to show why, in fact, Weber's model is worth using.

Critics think that by deeming it possible for a regime to be legitimised just because those subject to it believe that it is ignores the moral qualities or foundations of a regime.[36] These, they assert, must be considered because by failing to do so Weber allows the possibility of tyrannical regimes gaining legitimacy.[37] However, a set of principles that can be applied universally is what a theory should be seeking in order to give it widespread application. To fail to do

[33] R. Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford, 1990), p. 117.

[34] Barker (1990), p. 77.

[35] Barker (1990), pp. 199-200. Also see Weber (1994a), pp. 28-29.

[36] See R. Grafstein, 'The Failure of Weber's Concept of Legitimacy', *Journal of Politics*, 43 (1981), p. 456 and K. Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, (Oxford, 1980), p. 109 for examples of such criticism.

[37] Barker (1990), p. 25.

so risks producing a theory based on the evidence to prove a certain point rather than all the evidence that could be used to prove a general point, and consequently provides too narrow a view on what can constitute legitimacy.

Beetham qualifies his criticism of Weber by stating that legitimacy should exist not because it is believed to do so but because it can be justified in terms of beliefs which conform to the people's or society's values or standards.[38] He is also critical of the three aspects identified by Weber as he believes that they are all made into self-sufficient types of legitimacy rather than being aspects that combine to make up legitimacy.[39] Fault with Weber is also found by others, such as Habermas, who believe that legitimacy cannot arise from within the government and administration alone, but that it requires something further from outside the political system to justify it in rational terms.[40] Weber's model, therefore, according to Barker needs extending to include what he calls a 'value rational legitimacy', which is associated with the values or policies that the regime propounds.[41]

---

[38] Beetham (1991), p. 11. Beetham (1991), pp. 15-24 defines what he considers legitimacy to be. The three aspects that he believes all need to be present are (1) conformity to established rules, which can be (2) justified by referring to beliefs that the subordinate and dominant within the society both share and (3) evidence that the subordinate consent to their relationship with the dominant. These aspects all ensure that there is acceptance of and obedience to a regime. Views such as Beetham's are seeking to build on Weber's foundation in order to iron out the kinks. For example, aspect (2) of Beetham (see 1991, p. 17) is similar to the idea of legality established by Weber as both require power to be derived from a valid source of authority. Therefore, Weber's principles will form the basis for the theory of legitimacy to be used in this study.

[39] Beetham (1991), p. 24.

[40] J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* trans. by T. McCarthy, (London, 1976), pp. 101-102.

[41] Barker (1990), p. 38.

Weber does not include a notion of a value rational legitimising factor because his conception of authority is not morally based and so he did not consider it a necessary inclusion.[42] Any regime that is truly reprehensible will struggle to foster the belief amongst those subject to it that it is legitimate, or will be quickly de-legitimated. There may be sufficient belief within certain circles, usually those closest to the regime who form its power base, that are enough to provide it with some legitimacy, but without more broad support, this risks being lost. The aim of any regime should be to bolster the belief in it rather than merely to maintain its initial support base in case it alienates a part of it and suffers delegitimation.

The right of emperors to rule, and consequently the security of their legitimacy, required that there be some belief within the society of their right to do so, otherwise they would merely be relying upon force to assert their will. To assess whether a regime has acquired legitimacy or not, it is necessary to evaluate the level of public support and compliance that it enjoys.[43] This can be measured by its ability to ensure that its commands are obeyed.[44] For Weber, the fact its

[42] Barker (1990), p. 53. Also see Weber (1994a), pp. 31-32.

[43] R. Rose, 'Dynamic Tendencies in the Authority of Regimes', *World Politics* XXI (4) (July 1969): pp. 606-607.

[44] F. Rosen, 'Legitimacy: A Utilitarian View' in A. Moulakis, ed., *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982* (New York, 1986), p. 69. Rosen (1986, p. 75) emphasises that Bentham does not aim to establish that representative democracy is the only legitimate form of government, because every government which is obeyed by the people is legitimate. The concept of obedience is apparent in Weber's definition of dominance, whereby he states that domination (or the authoritarian power of command) is the way in which rulers are able to influence the behaviour of those they rule in such a way as to make it seem as though they considered what was commanded by the ruler to be the reason for their conduct through their own

commands are being obeyed is not necessarily sufficient to indicate that there is obedience, but the fact that there is obedience does suggest that the command is perceived to be valid.[45] This requires consensus and unity amongst the powerful groups in the society about the value of their political institutions.[46] Legitimacy involves a two-way relationship between the ruler and the ruled which requires there to be some belief from the subordinate about the right of the dominant to exercise that authority.[47] The different elements that make up a society have different needs and beliefs, so it is the perceptions of those sections of society that are dominant, rather than those over whom power is exercised, that are the most important.[48]

Ideally, the emperors would make sure that they kept both the nobles and the people happy, but this was not always easily achieved. As Cassius Dio has Septimius state, and also as espoused by Tacitus a century before him, it was important for emperors, especially new ones, to keep the soldiers happy first and foremost (Cass. Dio 77.15.2/Tac. *Hist.* 1.4-5).[49] Therefore, ensuring the support of

free will, rather than any imposition. This can, when looked at from the other perspective, be called obedience rather than domination. See Weber (1968), p. 946.

[45] Weber (1968), p. 946.

[46] G. Lowell Field and J. Higley, 'Elites, Insiders, and Outsiders: Will Western Political Regimes Prove Non-Viable?' in B. Denitch, ed., *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis* (London, 1979), pp. 141-142.

[47] Weber (1962), p. 20. Also see Beetham (1991), p. 18. He believes that the expression of this belief needs to be explicit through, for example, acclamation, swearing allegiance or voting in elections. This means that the subordinate are contributing to legitimacy.

[48] J. Rothschild, 'Political Legitimacy in Contemporary Europe' in B. Denitch, ed., *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis* (London, 1979), p. 51.

[49] See Tac. *Hist.* 1.4. evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri. Since the troops had the power to make or break a regime, the emperor needed to ensure they were kept

the powerful groups could mean that a regime out of favour with the mass of the population could still preserve its legitimacy.[50] This does not mean that a regime has to be supported by the whole of society to be considered legitimate. It still may be considered so provided there are sufficiently powerful elements within the society willing to continue to acknowledge its legitimacy and those elements that do not explicitly support it still either implicitly accept the regime's right to exercise its authority through their obedience or are not in a position for their beliefs to be of consequence.[51] The willingness to submit to orders, whether implicitly or explicitly, on the part of those who are subordinate can be for any number of diverse and individualistic reasons, which can include habit, self-interest or a sense of pressure from either the wider community in general or more specifically those in the positions of power.[52] Sometimes this compliance is tacit as a combination of custom, tradition and law means the individual is not even aware that he or she is submitting to orders.[53]

---

happy or there was the possibility that they would rebel, as noted by Tacitus (*Hist.* 1.5)

> Miles urbanus longo Caesarum sacramento imbutus et ad destituendum Neronem arte magis et impulsu quam suo ingenio traductus, postquam neque dari donativum sub nomine Galbae promissum neque magnis meritis ac praemiis eundem in pace quem in bello locum praeventamque gratiam intellegit apud principem a legionibus factum.

This would help to explain why Dio considered that Septimius would advise his sons ὁμονοεῖτε, τοὺς στρατιώτας πλουτίζετε, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων καταφρονεῖτε (Cass. Dio 77.15.2).

[50] Rothschild (1979), p. 51.

[51] T. Schabert, 'Power, Legitimacy and Truth: Reflections on the Impossibility to Legitimise Legitimations of Political Order' In A. Moulakis, ed., *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982* (New York, 1986), pp. 102-103. Also Barker (1990), p. 113.

[52] Ciacci (1986), pp. 22-23.

[53] Weber (1962), p. 83.

There are three interlinked components that Barker identifies which help ensure that a regime's commands are obeyed; reward, belief and coercion.[54] Rewards for obedience can be given either for the general benefit of society but are more often used to strengthen its position with its support base.[55] The belief in a regime's legitimacy can be shown through some positive assertion but it is not necessarily required in order for this to be so as legitimacy can be derived from habit.[56] The great majority of the people, if their lives are undisturbed, generally show an acceptance of the regime change by continuing on with the normal routine of their lives.[57] Barker argues that this unquestioned acceptance of authority makes habitual legitimacy the most characteristic form of legitimacy and, just because there is no overt show of acceptance of the regime's right to govern, it is a mistake to believe that a regime is not being recognised as legitimate.[58]

The role that coercion and fear play in helping a regime acquire legitimacy is open to debate. For Weber, a distinguishing feature of a state is that it enjoys a monopoly over the means of coercion,[59] with enforcement being the ultimate

[54] Barker (1990), p. 37.

[55] A. Moulakis, 'Introduction' in A. Moulakis, ed., *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982* (New York, 1986), p. 4.

[56] Barker (1990), pp. 31-32. Beetham (1991, pp. 150-151) argues that the consent of the governed needs to be explicitly given, although he also believes that in 'traditional' societies, such as many medieval monarchies where the privileged and propertied had rights which the greater mass of the populace did not, it was possible for consent to be given on behalf of others. Those involved in the political arena in these societies was quite small and their consent was taken to include that of the subordinates and dependents.

[57] N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. by G. Bull (London, 1981), p. 36.

[58] Barker (1990), p. 33.

[59] Weber (1984), p. 33.

sanction upon which governments are able to call.[60] He does not, however, define the use of this monopoly as legitimate in all circumstances since it may not always be so considered by those forced to submit to it[61] and, whilst Barker agrees that fear plays a necessary part in governance, he points out that this should not be the only reason that there is compliance.[62] Regimes that are perceived to be maintaining their power through their direct dependence upon force and coercion enjoy little legitimacy.[63] Indeed, Moulakis would argue that if this was the only reason that there was obedience, a regime could not be regarded as legitimate at all.[64] It is the recognition that the fear of force exacts, in the form of obedience, rather than the force alone which allows a regime to be recognised as legitimate.[65] The *imperium* which they held allowed the Roman generals to enforce their commands and gave them the legal basis with which to do so.

Coercion and legitimacy, therefore, cannot be considered to be mutually exclusive and, since they are both characteristics of governments, they serve to sustain each

[60] Barker (1990), p. 50. Also see pp. 129-130.

[61] Barker (1990), p. 56.

[62] Barker (1990), pp. 129-130.

[63] Lowell Field and Higley (1979), pp. 141-142. Also see Polyb. (6.4) who considers that one-man rule is only kingship if it is voluntarily accepted by its subjects and governed by an appeal to reason rather than by fear or by force: οὔτε γὰρ πᾶσαν δήπου μοναρχίαν εὐθέως βασιλείαν ῥητέον, ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν ἐξ ἑκόντων συγχωρουμένην καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τὸ πλεῖον ἢ φόβῳ καὶ βίᾳ κυβερνωμένην.

[64] A. Moulakis, 'Introduction.' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, (New York, 1986), pp. 3-4.

[65] M. Cranston, 'From Legitimism to Legitimacy' in A. Moulakis, ed., *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982* (New York, 1986), p. 38.

other.[66] It is possible to argue, as Rosen does,[67] that legitimacy, given the broad range of meanings given to the term, can be claimed by even those regimes which are tyrannical by nature. This is because they claim moral 'rightness' for the laws they institute through the force of their arms and the terror they inspire whereby they are able to gain the obedience of sufficient or sufficiently powerful elements of the populace.

It is necessary, however, to take the attitude of those subject to the regime into account. It is not necessary for submission to be based on faith in a regime's legitimacy as loyalty can be simulated, but the fact that its subjects play by its rules does suggest that there is faith in the system of government that is operating.[68] Regimes that seek to govern from principles that those being governed do not accept find that their attempts at coercion are resisted, not because of their violence alone, but because of the very unacceptability of the principles.[69] Therefore, if the nature of the government, regardless of the form that it takes, is sufficiently acceptable to gain the obedience of the populace, whether simulated or not, a regime should be able to claim that it is ruling legitimately. Rome itself was a society in which force and coercion had always played a

[66] Barker (1990), p. 132. See also Beetham (1991), p. 139. The relationship between coercion and legitimacy is complex and the use of force when used to suppress deeply held grievances can erode rather than bolster legitimacy. At other times legitimacy can be eroded when the state is seen to fail to use force to suppress the expression of grievances by parts of the population.

[67] Rosen (1986), p. 67.

[68] Ando (2000), p. 374.

[69] Barker (1990), pp. 134-135. See also Beetham (1991), p. 35. Legitimate power is limited power because those in the positions of power are only able to maintain their power by respecting the rules and principles upon which their legitimacy is accepted. To transgress is to risk delegitimation. These rules define the duties and obligations of the powerful and the subordinate.

significant role. Events such as the foundation of the city and Augustus' establishment of the empire were both enmeshed with violence.[70] Therefore, to dismiss the possibility of legitimacy being able to have some basis in violence is to dismiss the possibility of the legitimacy of the Roman government.

Regimes regularly try to bolster their own legitimacy through the use of rituals, propaganda and education, usually because of their insecurity.[71] They can include appeals to non-political sources such as to divine sanction, where they will seek, through their propaganda, to associate themselves with certain gods.[72] Polybius believed that Rome's approach to religion held the state together and was adopted for the sake of the common people because it served to restrain them from any lawless desires that existed (Polyb. 6.56).[73] The oaths that were taken were expected to galvanise the state and prevent unscrupulous behaviour (Polyb. 6.56). Therefore, tying themselves to certain gods and diligently performing rituals for the gods that were important within the state allowed Roman emperors to be able to enhance their prestige and consequently the legitimacy of their regimes in the

[70] See Livy 1.6-10 for some instances of the violence associated with Rome's founding such as the murder of Remus and the rape of the Sabine women. Suet. *Aug.* 15 and 17 contain examples of the violence in the power struggle preceding the establishment of the empire.

[71] Barker (1990), p. 145. Also see p. 156.

[72] Barker (1990), p. 27. An example of this would be the association the Diocletian and Maximian had with Jupiter and Hercules (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39).

[73] λέγω δὲ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν· ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἐκτετραγῴδηται καὶ παρεισῆκται τοῦτο τὸ μέρος παρ' αὐτοῖς εἴς τε τοὺς κατ' ἰδίαν βίους καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῆς πόλεως ὥστε μὴ καταλιπεῖν ὑπερβολήν. ὃ καὶ δόξειεν ἂν πολλοῖς εἶναι θαυμάσιον. ἐμοί γε μὴν δοκοῦσι τοῦ πλήθους χάριν τοῦτο πεποιηκέναι. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν πολίτευμα συναγαγεῖν, ἴσως οὐδὲν ἦν ἀναγκαῖος ὁ τοιοῦτος τρόπος ... ἐπεὶ δὲ πᾶν πλῆθός ἐστιν ἐλαφρὸν καὶ πλῆρες ἐπιθυμιῶν παρανόμων, ὀργῆς ἀλόγου, θυμοῦ βιαίου,

eyes of the people. Gallienus, for example, was promoted as the intermediary between the gods and men on his coinage and in inscriptions.[74] Perceived external threats can also be used by a regime to augment their standing within the state or justify actions undertaken that require explaining.[75]

Legitimacy is something that regimes can lose as well as acquire, although to lose it is never their goal. The theoretical and moral grounds that can create legitimacy can also be the grounds for its denial. This is because norms are only justifiable when some form of rational consensus, whether actual or potential, exists.[76] Therefore crises of legitimation occur when people can no longer explain why they ought to obey and mass loyalty cannot be maintained.[77] This should be adjusted from mass to sufficient loyalty, however, as not every legitimate regime will have mass loyalty to begin with.

---

[74] L. de Blois. 'Traditional Virtues and New Spiritual Qualities in Third Century Views of Empire, Emperorship and Practical Politics' in *Mnemosyne*, Vol 47 No 2, April 1994, pp. 173-174. *ILS* 548, for example, promotes his piety – *Gallieno ... cuius inuicta uirtus sola pietate superata est* – and especially *ILS* 550 when he is claimed to be *Inuicto imperatori Pio Felici Gallieno Augusto, dis animo uoltuque compari*. Also see RIC V.1 Gallienus 81 for an example of a coin displaying the relationship between Gallienus and Victory, who is crowning him on the coin's reverse.

[75] Barker (1990), p. 150. An example is Septimius' Persian invasion immediately after he had defeated Niger (Cass. Dio 75.2.2). This took attention away from the civil war which had taken place and refocused the army and people on the threats which existed to Rome from beyond its borders.

[76] Habermas (1976), p. 111.

[77] Habermas (1976), p. 46. Beetham (1991), p. 119 gives some examples. These include the failure of a policy that was considered important, hardships being imposed on the people, national humiliation or the death or disability of the leader. This last reason can especially cause problems when the regime relies on the charisma as the main principle of its legitimation.

Weber's categories for legitimate authority can be used in order to establish whether the regimes throughout the third and first half of the fourth centuries were legitimate. These categories were important factors which were needed in order to give a regime the requisite level of support and obedience throughout the society which the regime governed. Regimes, therefore, could be established on the basis of one or even on a combination of Weber's principles. To be considered legitimate it was necessary for there to be sufficient belief within the populace that a regime had a legal and traditional right to rule that would prevent it being challenged by any groups that did not believe in its right to govern. This belief needed to be held not only by those in power, but also by other powerful and dominant groups within the society. This belief was represented by obedience, whether explicit or implicit, that ensured compliance to the regime's commands. Obedience could be obtained through rewards, their expectation, or through coercion. It could not, however, rely solely on coercion as there needed to be a desire on the part of those who were obedient to be so.

Defining the legitimation of imperial regimes within Weber's framework means that criticisms and defences of his work will equally apply to those works that are guided by his. The strength of his framework is, however, that it can be used to assess many different regime types and adjusted for differences in time and place. Therefore, setting a framework that espouses modern western democracy as the ideal type of regime does not suit a society such as Rome that is so far removed in time and ideology. Applying modern western liberal conceptions of what constitutes legitimacy rather than formulating a framework that can accommodate

regimes of different types and historical periods disregards the perceptions that the Romans themselves had of their system of government and those within their system. The Romans did consider some men to be legitimate leaders whose commands were to be obeyed, whilst being well aware of the concept of usurpers who did not command such widespread respect.

Chapter 2: Legally Proclaimed Legitimacy

Legitimate regimes need to be proclaimed by an authoritative source.[1] The belief in the legality of the authoritative source occurs when there are rules which are conformed to and for which there is an accepted procedure.[2] Those who do not concur, however, can be willing to acquise to the will of the majority. The Roman army was not the majority but legitimacy can be achieved by minorities who do seek to impose an order on the majority,[3] which occurs when the majority submit.[4] This was the case with the army in Rome. It was an authoritative source of power and there was a belief in the legitimacy of this authority.[5] The obedience shown to an emperor was based on the authority he had received from the authoritative source.[6] The people and army had been willing to submit to the Senate's will in Rome's past and the Senate continued to hold some vestage of their power. It was not, however, any longer the sole authority in regard to legitimating regimes.

The Senate's powers had been waning prior to the imperial period and, although it continued to exist, the nature and importance of the Senate as an authoritative source needs to be examined. This has been necessary in order to test how much influence it retained in the legitimation process at the beginning of the third

[1] M. Weber. *Sociological Writings*. (New York, 1994a), p. 12.

[2] M. Weber. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*. (New York, 1947), pp. 329-330.

[3] Weber (1994a), pp. 31-32.

[4] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[5] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[6] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

century and what changes took place thereafter. In contrast, in third century Rome, the most important source was the army.[7] The power of the army had meant that it was the major force behind the appointment of emperors long before the period under discussion.[8] The nature of any relationship between the army and the Senate, therefore, also needs to be considered to see whether there was a cooperative role in the legitimation process and how important it was.

Regimes throughout the third century struggled to establish and maintain their legitimacy. Commodus had no natural successor so his death was followed by instability and civil war (Zos. 1.7.1-1.8.2). Various candidates emerged in the twelve months following his death and all of these men had the support of parts of the army. Of these candidates, however, only Septimius Severus managed to legitimise his regime over the longer term and win the support of the whole of the army (Herodian 3.6.8). As well this support, he also gained the backing of the Senate (Cass. Dio 76.8.5). The backing Septimius received from the Senate was not overwhelming in its enthusiasm (Cass. Dio 76.8.5) but that he did receive it meant that its resources and influence were not put behind a potential rival.

Prior to the third century, the men who had become emperor were all from the Senatorial order. This changed during the third century and the social status of the men who rose to become emperor varied. There continued to be some men, such

[7] C.S. Mackay, *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History*, (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 279-280.

[8] This went back to Augustan times and can be seen clearly in times of instability such as the civil wars of AD 68-69 and again after the death of Domitian. See Tacitus' *History* for the instability of AD 68-69 and especially Tac. *Hist* 1.4.

as Valerian, Tacitus, Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus, who rose to become emperor from amongst the Senate's ranks, but there were others, such as Macrinus, Maximinus Thrax and Diocletian who were army men with neither an illustrious ancestry nor even necessarily Senatorial status of their own.[9] For all of these emperors during this time, regardless of their social background, the army was the most important source of power and, consequently, had the most important role in their legitimation.[10] Septimius Severus was declared emperor by his troops (Zos. 1.8.1)[11] and this was not a new phenomenon.[12] The power the army had to promote men to become emperor was one that was never successfully removed from them and emperors had managed to secure their legitimacy after having been declared by the troops far back in the first century, with Vespasian being a notable example of this.[13]

[9] A. Chastagnol, *Le Senat Romain à l'Époque Impériale* (Paris, 1992), p. 203 and also p. 207.

[10] M. Hammond, 'The Transformation of the Powers of the Roman Emperor from the Death of Nero in AD 68 to that of Alexander Severus in AD 235' in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*. 1956. Vol. 24, p. 63. This was the case by the end of the second century.

[11] Τῆς δὲ γερουσίας εἰς τὸ διασκοπῆσαι τίνι δέοι παραδοῦναι τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναβαλλομένης, Σεβῆρος ἀναδείκνυται βασιλεύς

[12] Vespasian provides an example of this. Vespasian's acclamation occurred while Vitellius was emperor in Rome and when the two Egyptian legions declared for him with the Judaean and Syrian legions following suit (Tac. *Hist.* 2.79-81). He dated his rule from this time rather than when the Senate accepted him as the legitimate emperor in December 69 (Tac. *Hist.* 4.3). Although he was initially usurping power, he was quickly able to establish his legitimacy through the requisite sources. There are parallels between this and Septimius' acclamation whilst Didius Julianus was the incumbent emperor in Rome.

[13] As mentioned above in note 12.

The speed with which Septimius moved after Pertinax's death suggests he had been awaiting his opportunity.[14] It was an advantage to be prepared and ensure that the troops were supportive since the major problem facing any would-be emperor was to ensure that enough troops were sufficiently loyal to him so that they would not declare for their general against him.[15] Therefore, it was necessary to have the backing of other generals in order to remove the likelihood that they would also challenge. As a wealthy Senator, Septimius had connections and clients, all of whom he would have expected support and information from.[16] Information and assistance from these supporters is what had allowed him to survive Commodus and succeed Pertinax.[17] His strategic marriage to Julia Domna would also have helped since it served to enhance his support network with those who were tied to her family.[18] All an ambitious man needed was the right opportunity and the right support and, given the unpopularity of Commodus and his erratic behaviour, it would have seemed likely that an opportunity would arise,[19] although the exact moment that the imperial position might come vacant was uncertain.

---

[14] A. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London, 1971), p. 158.

[15] Most usurpations came about because a general had the support of his troops who would declare him emperor. Postumus, for example, was a general in Gaul whose army acclaimed him emperor (*HA Tyr. Trig.* 3) but he never received any recognition from the armies outside of Gaul and Gallienus remained the legitimate emperor.

[16] T.D. Barnes, 'The Family and Career of Septimius Severus', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1967. Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 98.

[17] P. Southern, *The Roman Empire From Severus to Constantine* (London, 2001), pp. 29-30. See *HA. Sev.* 5.3 for the precaution he took to make sure his rear was protected whilst he marched on Rome. It would seem from the lack of resistance he faced that he had done this groundwork.

[18] B. Levick,. *Julia Domna: Syrian Princess*. (London, 2007), p. 24.

[19] F. Meijer, *Emperors Don't Die in Bed*, (London, 2004), pp. 63-65.

Herodian's discussion of the events surrounding Septimius' promotion, by using a term that has implications of robbery and rapine (ἁρπάσαι), indicate that he is aware of the illegitimacy of Septimius' seizure of power (Herodian 2.9.3).[20] At this point, then, he cannot have been considered to have met any of Weber's principles for establishing his regime's legitimacy.[21] At the time of his acclamation the declaration by the army cannot be considered to have been a declaration by a legitimate authority. The group which recognised Septimius was only a part of the Roman army since other parts supported other men. It was, however, more than just his own troops who supported Septimius, with the generals on the Rhine and Danube encouraging their troops to declare for him (*HA Sev* 5.3). The *Historia Augusta* should be considered reliable on this occasion because these legions were honoured by Septimius on his coinage.[22] This meant that his network of support was effective and he had gathered quite a firm base from which to launch his bid for power.[23]

The proximity of these supporters meant that, in spite of the threat from other contenders, he was able to deal with Julianus while being protected in his rear. Didius Julianus had been recognised as emperor, in spite of having effectively

[20] οὗτος τοίνυν παρὰ τῶν ἀγγελλόντων πυνθανόμενος τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν μετέωρον φερομένην ἁρπάσαι, καταγνοὺς τοῦ μὲν ῥᾳθυμίαν τοῦ δὲ ἀνανδρίαν, ... τοῖς πράγμασιν.

[21] Weber (1947), pp. 328-329.

[22] H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum: Volume V Pertinax to Elagabalus* (Oxford, 1950), p. lxxxii

[23] A. Birley, *The African Emperor: Septimius Severus* (London, 1988), pp. 97-98.

bought the imperial title (Cass. Dio 74.11.3-6).[24] He had not, however, established firm support from enough bases amongst the Praetorians and the Senate so they were unlikely to join his forces to oppose Septimius on his behalf. Julianus attempted to put pressure on both of these groups to support him (Cass. Dio 74.16.1-3), but they both ended up opposing him (*HA Did. Iul.* 8.6-7). The other contenders for power were not in a position to tackle Septimius as he marched towards Rome and may well have been happy to let one of Septimius or Julianus eliminate the other. Septimius was protected from Pescennius Niger by Niger's distance from Rome since he was in the east (Cass. Dio 74.14.3). Niger was more concerned with securing allies in the east than marching on Rome when he heard of Septimius' coup.[25]

There was also the threat from Clodius Albinus in Britain, if indeed Albinus had thrown his hat in the ring this early.[26] The exact timing of Albinus' declaration remains uncertain. He, however, was also far from Rome and, if he did present an immediate threat, the armies on the Rhine could have countered his advance (Herodian 2.9.12). Neither of these other contenders had sufficient backing within the army away from their sphere of influence to allow them to tackle any other would-be emperor immediately.[27] Instead, the distance that separated these three

[24] Being the highest bidder for the imperial title did not lend his regime credibility, but he was in Rome and had received recognition for his status from the requisite sources – the army and the Senate. Cass. Dio (74.12-13), however, being someone who did not like Julianus, points out that he secured the imperial powers from the Senate under duress. With the army's backing, however, the Senate's lack of enthusiasm did not stop him from being legitimated.

[25] Levick (2007), p. 24.

[26] Hammond (1956), p. 111.

[27] Levick (2007), p. 40. Niger had ten legions, all of which were based in the east. He did not have

men from one another allowed them to gather their support and devise their strategies to prepare for the clashes amongst themselves that were inevitably coming.

A declaration by a minority of the army in favour of their commander, as had occurred for Septimius, was also a common feature of the post-Severan era. Some of these commanders managed to secure their legitimacy, whereas others were never recognised by more than their own troops or a small geographic portion of the empire. Postumus, for example, was never recognised outside the regions he controlled (*HA Tyr. Trig.* 3.4.5/Zos. 1.38.2). It was an advantage for those who aspired to take power, should the opportunity arise, to be with the emperor when he went on campaign since he had a large army with him and it was often military failures that led to de-legitimation and usurpation.[28] The size of this army, therefore, gave the incoming emperor a chance to gain the acceptance of a significant portion of the military immediately since the greater the acceptance from the army as a whole, the more secure the regime's base. Those with only a small portion of the army supporting them were unable to secure their regimes as

---

any armed allies as support in the west. The west was under Septimius' command as he was, at this time, allied with Albinus and, consequently, had the support of all those legions. Once Niger had been defeated and Septimius turned against Albinus, Septimius had all of the legions from the east and many of those from the west under his command. Albinus too was lacking armed support from outside of the regions he controlled (pp.38-40).

[28] See J. B. Campbell, *War and Society in Imperial Rome 31 BC – AD 284* (London, 2002), p. 120 and A. Birley, 'Making Emperors. Imperial Instrument or Instrumental Force?' in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, (Malden, MA., 2007), pp. 389-390.

shown by the ultimate failure of Postumus and Carausius to achieve acceptance of their claims throughout the empire.[29]

Incoming emperors often took care to avoid being held responsible for the death of their predecessor unless they had defeated them in battle, with the respect Philip the Arab showed towards Gordian III being an example (*HA Gord* 31.3). When the preceding emperor had died in mysterious circumstances it would have been detrimental to establishing the legitimacy of their own regime to have been implicated. The fallen emperors may have been de-legitimated in the eyes of those who were the authoritative source but they were not universally unpopular and their demise was lamented by some as was the case with Caracalla (Herodian 4.13.7). Those who were proclaimed were often in the vicinity of the emperor they replaced, so it would seem likely that some of them, such as Macrinus, Maximinus Thrax and Philip the Arab, were complicit in their predecessor's downfall.[30]

Philip the Arab may or may not have been involved in the demise of Gordian III. It is not possible to say for sure because there are conflicting stories in the sources.[31] Philip did, however, treat Gordian's memory with the greatest respect. He transported his ashes back to Rome and oversaw Gordian's deification (*HA*

[29] K. Stobel, 'Strategy and Army Structure between Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great' in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, (Malden, MA., 2007), pp. 269-271.

[30] J.B. Campbell, *The Roman Army: A Sourcebook*, (London, 1994), p. 191.

[31] See D. MacDonald, 'The Death of Gordian III: Another Tradition'. *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1981. Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 502-508 for discussion about this conflict. Also see *HA. Gordians* 30.8, Eutr. 9.2, Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 27 and Zos. 1.18-19

Gord. 31.3).[32] That he considered this to be the right thing to do shows that there were still elements of Roman society that had regard for Gordian and that he had not become de-legitimised to such an extent that his standing could be disregarded. This means that what Philip did was, in part, reverence to his predecessor and the position of emperor but, by doing so, he was also trying to make sure that he removed any suspicion that he might have played a role in Gordian's death. Other emperors also chose to deify their predecessors. Trebonianus Gallus allowed the deification of Decius (Eutr. 9.3), which was another case of attempting to remove suspicion of complicity in his death, an accusation which Zosimus makes of him (Zos. 1.23.2).[33]

Macrinus owed his elevation upon Caracalla's murder to the army that was present in the east (Herodian 4.14.1-3), although he did not take the throne immediately upon Caracalla's death since he did not want to be accused of killing him in order to succeed him (Cass. Dio 79.11.4). Macrinus found himself in a difficult position since he received his support from the army, but he also needed to curb imperial expenditure because Caracalla's extravagance had depleted the treasury to such an extent that he could not afford to pay new recruits at the levels set by Caracalla (Cass. Dio 79.12.7). Although he tried to be careful and did not remove the privileges of those who had served under Caracalla, his measures did result in disaffection.[34] His shaky hold on power became even more so when

[32] appellato igitur principe Philippo et Augusto nuncupato Gordianum adul<e>scentem inter deos rettulit.

[33] εἰς τὸ νεωτερίζειν ὁ Γάλλος τραπεὶς ἐπικηρυκεύεται πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους, κοινωνῆσαι τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς τῆς κατὰ Δεκίου παρακαλῶν.

[34] H.M.D. Parker, *A History of the Roman World from AD 138 to 337*, (London, 1935), p. 99. New

relatives of the Severans began promoting their own candidate for the throne (Cass. Dio 79.12.7 and 79.23.4) and the presence of the large imperial army began to work against him.[35] Dio states that he may have survived longer if he had waited until the army had been dispersed before introducing his measures and, if he had done so, it would have made it a lot more difficult for the dissatisfaction towards him to spread so quickly (Cass. Dio 79.29.1).

Maximinus Thrax and Philip the Arab, like Macrinus, benefited from being with the imperial army when their predecessor was overthrown since they were promoted to power and gained broad acceptance for their position from these troops.[36] Maximinus was declared emperor because the troops knew him better than Severus Alexander, or anyone else close to his imperial person, since he had risen through their ranks (Herodian 6.8.1-7). Other men, however, such as Carausius, Postumus and Regalianus who were not with the imperial entourage when their troops declared in their favour all succeeded to an extent in gaining some recognition but never extended it across the empire as a whole to legitimate their regimes.[37]

---

recruits were taken on at the rates of pay made under Septimius which meant they did not benefit from rises Caracalla awarded the army. See Cass. Dio 79.12.7.

[35] Parker (1935), p. 99.

[36] See P. Khuri Hitti, *History of Syria: Including Lebanon and Palestine*, (Piscataway, NJ. 2004), p. 345 and P. Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History*, (Santa Barbara, CA, 2006), p. 126.

[37] R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 212-213. See *HA Tyr. Trig.* 10.1-2 for Regalianus, Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 33 for Postumus and Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39 for Carausius.

Matters were far from simple for an emperor who was seeking to establish his rule. Whereas Constantine was an obvious candidate to push his imperial credentials because he was the son of an Augustus, Diocletian had not been. Both men, however, did have to create a situation which they could take advantage of. An obvious candidate or not, Constantine's accession, like Septimius' had been, was illegitimate at the time (Zos. 2.9.1).[38] He was promoted by the troops at a time when the army was not regarded as the authoritative source capable of proclaiming an emperor since promotion was then at the behest of the senior emperors. The speed of Constantine's flight from Galerius' court to his father's and the precautions he took to make sure he could not be hindered (Zos. 2.8.3)[39] showed that he either distrusted Galerius or he took these measures to cast Galerius in a bad light by making it look like he was seeking to harm him.[40] Either way, it was not an open or warm relationship that he was presenting with one of the legitimate *Augusti* of the day and one which suggests he was not expecting to be promoted into the imperial college. This was understandable considering he had already been passed over on Diocletian and Maximian's retirements.

---

[38] N. Lenski, 'The Reign of Constantine' in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. (Cambridge, 2006), p. 61. Constantine's elevation was through the agency of Constantius' praetorian guard rather than the imperial college. It was not a universal acclamation, just as Septimius' initial proclamation had not been universally declared (Zos. 1.8.1)

[39] ἐξορμῆσαι δὲ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα Κωνστάντιον ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ τὰς Ἄλπεις ἔθνεσιν ὄντα καὶ τῇ Βρεττανίᾳ συνεχέστερον ἐνδημοῦντα. Δεδιὼς δὲ μή ποτε φεύγων καταληφθείη (περιφανὴς γὰρ ἦν ἤδη πολλοῖς ὁ κατέχων αὐτὸν ἔρως τῆς βασιλείας) τοὺς ἐν τοῖς σταθμοῖς ἵππους, οὓς τὸ δημόσιον ἔτρεφεν, ἅμα τῷ φθάσαι τὸν σταθμὸν κολούων καὶ ἀχρείους ἐῶν τοῖς ἐξῆς ἑστῶσιν ἐχρῆτο· καὶ ἑξῆς τοῦτο ποιῶν τοῖς μὲν διώκουσιν ἀπέκλεισε τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσω πορείαν, αὐτὸς δὲ προσήγγιζεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐν οἷς ἦν ὁ πατήρ.

[40] Lenski (2006), p. 21 and M. Grant, *The Emperor Constantine*, (London, 1993), p. 22 are both sceptical about the story.

His proclamation by the troops did, however, force Galerius' hand which shows that although they were not, in theory, the authoritative source at that time they did retain their importance and power and were capable of asserting this when they wanted (*Pan Lat* 6(7).8.2). The balance which the tetrarchy had tried to establish in their own favour had not been successful when tested by force of arms. Galerius did not, however, cede all his ground and offered the position of Caesar to Constantine rather than accept him as a fellow Augustus (Lactant. *Mort. Pers.* 25). In order to establish himself, therefore, Constantine settled for this position. He had, however, gained a position in the imperial college and, thereafter, his tactics were the same as those of Septimius over a century earlier, who picked off his opponents one at a time (Eutr. 10.4-6). Constantine mastered the art of the strategic alliance as those he made with Maximian and then Licinius showed (Zos. 2.10.5-6 and Eutr. 10.5).[41] None of the others emperors, however, managed to form an alliance to take on Constantine because of the suspicion they felt towards each other. This would have been in part due to the actions of Constantine who was not interested in fostering an attitude of cooperation.

In Diocletian's case, he used Numerianus' death to his own advantage (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39).[42] The exact manner of his death is unknown, but Diocletian chose to affix the blame on Aper. By killing Aper (*HA Carus* 13),[43] Diocletian removed the

[41] Constantine and Licinius had had an alliance through Licinius' marriage to Constantine's sister, Constantia.

[42] T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), pp. 4-5.

[43] quem ad modum Numerianus esset occisus, educto gladio Aprum praefectum praetori ostentans percussit, addens verbis suis: 'hic est auctor necis Numeriani.'

risk that he could be accused of being involved because he had now established that he was Numerianus' avenger. This, consequently, gave Diocletian a link to the previous regime and Aper's death also removed a man who could threaten Diocletian's ambitions (Eutr. 9.20).[44] Diocletian's link to Numerianus as his avenger remained tenuous, however, whilst Carinus was present in the west since he was still alive and the legitimate emperor (Eutr. 9.19-20). It should have been Carinus who was his brother's avenger or, if Diocletian was to do it, he should have done it in Carinus' name. He was, however, helped in his ambitions by the usurpation of Sabinus Julianus against Carinus since it gave Diocletian the opportunity to wait for a victor (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). If that was Julianus, then Diocletian could set out to avenge the usurped legitimate emperor, just as he had avenged his brother.[45] It was, however, Carinus who was successful so Diocletian had to oppose him by levelling the same charge of tyranny against him that those who tried to promote Julianus had done (Zos. 1.73.1) and claim that he wanted to rescue the people from his oppressive regime.[46] After his success, Diocletian gained the support of the remnants of Carinus' army when the troops swore an oath of allegiance to him.[47] This enhanced his legitimacy because it tied the troops to him. Carinus' defeat also meant that there were no longer any other candidates for the throne left standing.

---

[44] S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery.* (London, 1985), pp. 35-37.

[45] Southern (2001), p. 135.

[46] Also see *HA Carus* 18 – Carinus '*maiora vitia et scelera edidit, quasi iam liber ac frenis domesticae pietatis suorum mortibus absolutus*'. Also see Eutr. 9.20, who states that Carinus '*omnium odio et detestatione viventem*'.

[47] Williams (1985), p. 38.

The support of an authoritative source was essential for establishing a regime and the removal of this support could result in the regime's delegitimation and overthrow. Therefore, it was important to maintain the belief in the regime's legitimacy.[48] Carinus, for example, was de-legitimised. According to Victor (*Caes* 39), he was able to defeat Julianus which showed that he had had the respect of his troops at that time. His behaviour, however, is portrayed as being that of a tyrant. Whether this was true or merely subsequent propaganda by Diocletian through which he sought to justify his own actions in challenging the legitimate emperor is neither here nor there. That his troops saw fit to assassinate him (Aur. Vict. *Caes* 39)[49] shows that he had lost his standing amongst the troops and his position, which should have been secure, was successfully challenged.[50]

Septimius was well aware that the path which he had taken to become emperor was one that any man could take provided he was ambitious and there was enough dissatisfaction amongst enough of the army for them to be receptive to any seditious talk.[51] Having loyal men, therefore, was imperative for any emperor who desired to maintain their position. Men of ambition had to be working for the regime rather than against it if the emperor was to maintain the undivided loyalty of the army. To this end, Septimius' strategies proved effective. He knew that an

[48] Weber (1994a), p. 29.

[49] At Carinus ubi Moesiam contigit, illico Marcum iuxta Diocletiano congressus, dum victos avide premeret, suorum ictu interiit.

[50] Williams (1985), p. 38.

[51] J.B. Campbell. *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 BC – AD 235*. (Oxford, 1984), pp. 171 and also 51-52. Septimius paid larger than usual donatives and decided to forego imperial luxuries in order to share the hard life which his men had to endure. Also see Herodian 3.6.10.

emperor could only successfully establish himself if he was the sole source of power and patronage, so he had to prevent anyone from becoming powerful enough to challenge him.[52] Septimius could not, however, afford to stifle all hope of advancement but he was able to rein in the ambitions of others through the example of his severity to opponents and patronage through advancement for supporters (Cass. Dio 77.16.1-2).[53] Soldiers would fight for their commander and if his legitimacy was secure, this commander was the emperor.

Septimius was well aware that the army was the source of his power so he ensured that they were rewarded either financially or through improved status by promotion (see Herodian 2.14.5 and 3.8.4-5). Having wealth or ready access to it, therefore, was imperative for a would-be emperor in order that supporters were rewarded for giving their support.[54] For example, Aurelian was quickly recognised by the mint at Siscia and coins were struck which he was able to give to the soldiers with his name on them to ensure their support for his elevation.[55] In the case of Septimius, he rewarded his best troops by appointing them to the Praetorian Guard. These men replaced the previous guardsmen whom Septimius had dismissed for their appalling conduct towards Pertinax (Cass. Dio

[52] Birley (1988), pp. 106-107 provides some examples.

[53] See Birley (1971), p. 165 for examples of his treatment of the Praetorian Guard and the reason, envy by the legionaries, as to why the Italian monopoly on service in the Guard was broken. Also see p. 199. Cass. Dio 75.8.1-3 states that he took away the property of some of his opponents, whereas other people were rewarded. When it was apparent that Plautianus, for example, was wielding too much power and threatening Caracalla's position, he was swiftly removed. See Birley (1988), p. 162.

[54] F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World: 31 BC – AD 337* (London, 1977) p. 136.

[55] A. Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century*, (London, 1999), p. 133.

75.1-2/Herodian 2.13.1-14.5).[56] This was not the reward they had envisioned when they had negotiated with him (Cass. Dio 74.17.3), but those men had proved themselves to be untrustworthy. This was not something which an emperor could afford and was in stark contrast to the loyalty of his own men.

Septimius achieved the necessary recognition of his position from the Senate.[57] He had set out for Rome as soon as he was proclaimed emperor by his troops, pausing only to ensure that he had enough support to protect his rear (*HA Sev.* 5.3), in order to confront Julianus, who had the Senate declare Septimius a public enemy (Cass. Dio 74.16.1). This meant that his position was not receiving legitimation from the requisite sources at this time. As well as removing Julianus, Septimius as a prospective emperor, needed to advertise himself to the Roman populace in order to show his respect for the city and the people and gain any favours for himself which the city wished to bestow rather than lose out on these to a rival.[58] Whether he really cared for the feelings of Rome's populace or not he did give them handouts which won them over to his side (Herodian 2.14.5).[59]

Emperors did need to be careful that they did not de-legitimate themselves in the eyes of the soldiers when trying to gain favour with the people with Probus failing

[56] bittoῖς τε στρατιώταις πολλὰ δωρησάμενος, καὶ τοὺς ἀκμαιοτάτους ἐπιλεξάμενος ἐς τὸ δορυφόρους εἶναι τῆς βασιλείας τόπῳ τῶν ἀπεζωσμένων, ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνατολὴν ἠπείγετο· (Herodian 2.14.5)

[57] Levick (2007), p. 38.

[58] C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2000) (2000), p. 137.

[59] τῷ δήμῳ μεγαλοφρόνως

on this score when, in an attempt to win the support of the war weary and over-taxed citizens of the empire, he remarked that the empire would not need an army. He ended up being assassinated as a consequence (HA *Prob.* 20.1-6).[60] Another emperor who cultivated the favour of the Roman people was Aurelian. He distributed money to them (HA *Aurel.* 48.5), which showed the Senate he was a populist as well as a military man. This was something that they were wary of but he did receive his powers from them without opposition, although that he could have just taken them for himself had he chosen was beyond question as the Senate lacked the means to oppose him.[61]

The Senate contained the richest men in Rome and it was the body authorised to confer the emperor's *imperium*.[62] Septimius was himself a Senator and, consequently, important supporters would be found within its ranks who were capable of looking after his interests and keeping him informed about developments.[63] He would have known that Julianus was discredited and struggling to maintain his own legitimacy. Challenging him, therefore, would not necessarily meet with stringent opposition if the challenger played his cards right.

---

[60] cum per Illyricum iter faceret, a militibus suis per insidias interemptus est. causae occidendi eius haec fuerunt: primum quod numquam militem o<t>iosum esse perpessus est, si quidem multa opera militari manu perfecit, dicens annonam gratuitam militem comedere non debere. his addidit dictum ei[u]s grave, si umquam eveniat, salutare rei p., brevi milites necessarios non futuros. quid ille conceperat animo qui hoc dicebat?

[61] Parker (1935), p. 143 and p. 194.

[62] R.J.A Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton, 1984), p. 354.

[63] Birley (1988), p. 97.

Septimius, when he took power, did make the right noises and won the Senate over by promising that he would rule like the good emperors of the past by not putting any Senators to death unless they were convicted by the Senate (Cass. Dio 75.2.1). Other emperors chose other methods to win the approval of the Senate and to be proclaimed by them. Philip the Arab's good relationship with the Senate was a result of his desire to foster traditional Roman virtues (Zos. 1.19.2-1.21.1). Making promises and delivering on them, however, were not one and the same thing. Septimius, once he had gained the Senate's acknowledgement of his position, did not treat the Senate as it wanted since he made it clear that he would have what he desired regardless of whether it supported him.[64] This did not, however, result in his regime being de-legitimated. In fact, he has respect from Dio and the stability he eventually provided for the empire was welcomed by the Senate (Cass. Dio. 77.16.1-77.17.4).

Elagabalus' reputation, on the other hand, was dismal.[65] There are a multitude of reasons for this and his disregard for the Senate is just one of them. Militarily Elagabalus was not seriously threatened by any external enemy which makes his demise all the more spectacular since this was the usual cause of an emperor's de-legitimation.[66] He was accused of removing opponents without even the pretence of going through the right channels by having them murdered without saying anything to the Senate either before or after the event (Cass. Dio 80.4.6). In this

[64] Hammond (1956), p. 115.

[65] J. Hoskinson, *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*, (London, 2000), p. 156. His background and perceived domination by his female relatives was ill-regarded by conservative Roman writers such as Cassius Dio.

[66] D. Shotter, *Rome and her Empire*, (London, 2003), p. 374.

regard, there is little difference to what Septimius had done. The significant difference was, however, that Septimius was dealing with those who had supported his opponents whereas Elagabalus was more indiscriminate.[67]

Those emperors best regarded in the sources respected the Senate by allowing it to confer their powers upon them and seeking its advice on the governance of the empire, with Augustus providing the model which others were expected to follow (*RG* 34).[68] Those ill-regarded on the other hand, like Commodus or Elagabalus, usually took imperial powers for themselves and/or relied on advice from people considered unworthy. For these actions, they were damned.[69] Maximinus Thrax was invested with the appropriate decrees by the Senate. He had been appointed by the army, through whose ranks he had risen, which meant that his lowly origins caused the Senate to have misgivings about his appointment (Eutr. 9.1/Herodian 7.1.2). The Senate usually ratified the appointment of the army, but only because it had no choice as was the case with Maximinus. The bias that was shown against men such as Maximinus was largely irrelevant unless the Senate had the force of arms with which to back any challenge they wanted to make. At the time of Maximinus' accession they did not, but after the revolt in Africa that brought the

[67] See Cass. Dio 80.3.4-7.4 for examples of a list of some of those put to death on Elagabalus' orders. Dio is horrified by the frivolous excuses which he cannot see any justification for.

[68] P.A. Brunt, 'The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 34, No 2. (1984), pp. 423-424. The Senate appeared to be the great body it had been in the Republic and continuing to maintain this appearance contributed to an emperor's prestige when Senatorial authors came to pen their thoughts.

[69] Southern (2001), pp. 248-249.

Gordians to power briefly, they did pull together an army, probably consisting predominantly of the urban Roman populace, to try to deal with him.[70]

The Senators believed that they were the best and most appropriate men for the emperor to consult about matters of law and public business (Herodian 6.1.1-4 and *HA Alex. Sev.* 15.6-16.3)[71] and it was men of this ilk who wrote the works we have surviving today. Severus Alexander's good reputation is mainly related to the belief that his reign was a return to the emperor being guided by the Senate (Herodian 6.1.2).[72] Syme, however, believes that, rather than a resurgence in power, the Senate had advanced its own interests due initially to the weak rule of Alexander and then again during Maximinus' reign due to his on-going absence from the city.[73] This had then led to the Senate nominating Pupienus and Balbinus, two of the leading men from amongst their number, to become emperor after the death of the first two Gordians (Herodian 7.10.1-5).

---

[70] D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395*, (London, 2004), p. 170.

[71] καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς τοὺς δοκοῦντας καὶ ἡλικίᾳ σεμνοτάτους καὶ βίῳ σωφρονεστάτους ἐκκαίδεκα ἐπελέξαντο συνέδρους εἶναι καὶ συμβούλους τοῦ βασιλέως· οὐδέ τι ἐλέγετο ἢ ἐπράττετο, εἰ μὴ κἀκεῖνοι αὐτὸ ἐπικρίναντες σύμψηφοι ἐγένοντο. ἤρεσκέ τε τῷ δήμῳ καὶ τοῖς στρατοπέδοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ συγκλήτῳ βουλῇ, τὸ σχῆμα τῆς βασιλείας ἐκ τυραννίδος ἐφυβρίστου ἐς ἀριστοκρατίας τύπον μεταχθείσης (Herodian 6.1.1-4).

[72] καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς τοὺς δοκοῦντας καὶ ἡλικίᾳ σεμνοτάτους καὶ βίῳ σωφρονεστάτους ἐκκαίδεκα ἐπελέξαντο συνέδρους εἶναι καὶ συμβούλους τοῦ βασιλέως· οὐδέ τι ἐλέγετο ἢ ἐπράττετο, εἰ μὴ κἀκεῖνοι αὐτὸ ἐπικρίναντες σύμψηφοι ἐγένοντο. ἤρεσκέ τε τῷ δήμῳ καὶ τοῖς στρατοπέδοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ συγκλήτῳ βουλῇ, τὸ σχῆμα τῆς βασιλείας ἐκ τυραννίδος ἐφυβρίστου ἐς ἀριστοκρατίας τύπον μεταχθείσης (Herodian 6.1.2).

[73] R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 175-178.

Maximinus was still alive but the Senate had never warmed to him due to his lowly origins, reputation for cruelty and his preference for staying with the army (see for example *HA Max* 8.1 and 8.6-9.2). They had also declared him a *hostes*, enemy of the state, which meant that there was no way back for their relationship with him (*HA Max.* 15.2).[74] The people did not, however, see the Senate's power as being all consuming anymore since the idea of dynastic succession was strong with them. They did not seek to help Maximinus remain in power. What they did do, however, was to demonstrate their belief in dynastic succession by agitating in favour of the young Gordian, who was the grandson of Gordian I and nephew of Gordian II (*HA Gord* 22.2).[75] As a consequence, the Senate was forced to invest him as Caesar to Pupienus and Balbinus' Augustus (Herodian 7.10.6-9).[76]

That the soldiers and people were able to agitate successfully for their own nominee, who was a child, shows how limited the real power of the Senate had become. Although they wanted to maintain their importance and prominence, there was little they could do when there were dissenting views and their hand was forced.[77] At the same time, having a child forced upon them would not have been a concern since they would have considered it a good opportunity to extend their influence. No child would be able to rule in his own right, so it is likely that

[74] senatus magis timens Maximinum aperte ac libere hostes appellat Maximinum et eius filium.

[75] Potter (2004), p. 170.

[76] ὅθεν δεδιότες ἀπηρέσκοντο αὐτῷ ἐβόων τε καὶ ἠπείλουν ἀποκτενεῖν αὐτούς· ἠξίουν γὰρ τοῦ Γορδιανοῦ γένους βασιλέα αἱρεθῆναι, τό τε τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς ὄνομα ἀρχῆς ἐκείνῳ τῷ οἴκῳ (Herodian 7.10.6) ... τῆς τε συγκλήτου Καίσαρα αὐτὸ ἀποδειξάσης, ἐπειδὴ διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν οὐχ οἷός τε ἦν προϊστασθαι τῶν πραγμάτων (Herodian 7.10.9).

[77] Potter (2004), pp. 170-171.

both groups saw the advantages of being able to exploit his youth to gain a measure of control for themselves.[78] When Gordian became Augustus he was indeed too young to rule independently and so did rely upon others, most particularly Timesitheus, his Praetorian Prefect and father-in-law (Zos. 1.17.2).[79]

After the emperors had removed themselves from Rome, the Senate became completely uninvolved in the process of decision making so it is only natural that the emperors were considered to have become increasingly autocratic and that their decisions came to have the force of law.[80] The pressure that the emperor was under to maintain the security of the empire meant that it was far more important for him to be close to the frontiers where the problems were and it was this pressure which also meant that decisions needed to be made quickly with a minimum of discussion resulting in increased autocracy.[81] Quick and decisive decisions needed to be made, therefore, in order that problems which arose could be dealt with and the troops kept happy.[82]

---

[78] Potter (2004), p. 171.

[79] Timesitheus was called Timesicles by Zosimus and Misitheus in the *HA Gordians* 13.6. See L.L. Howe, *The Praetorian Prefect from Commodus to Diocletian* (Chicago, 1942), pp. 78-79 for more information on Timesitheus' career.

[80] M. Chambers, 'The Crisis of the Third Century' in L. White, Jr., ed., *The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbon's Problems after Two Centuries* (Berkeley, 1966), p. 43. Also see *Digest* 1.4.1. Millar (1977), pp. 351-352 believes that the oath which was taken to observe the measures of past emperors and those which the current emperor would make shows that the Senate still had a role in the legitimation of imperial acts. This was the case in Dio's day (Cass. Dio 57.8.4-5).

[81] Southern (2001), p. 249.

[82] M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd Edition, revised by P.M. Fraser, Vol. 1, (Oxford, 1957), pp. 506-507.

Early in the third century, however, the emperors did try to ensure that they had support in the city of Rome and being there was the best way of doing this. Some emperors, such as Macrinus (Herodian 5.2.3), did not make it to Rome after they were proclaimed. This may have been because of how far away they were when they came to power, with Macrinus staying in the east to deal with affairs there, although Herodian believes he did have the opportunity and is critical of him for delaying his journey to Rome (Herodian 5.2.3).[83] Macrinus' absence from Rome was a disadvantage for securing the loyalty of the Senate and people but the advantage he did have was that he was not Caracalla, who was not at all popular with the Senate (Herodian 5.2.1).[84] In Dio's mind, however, he would have been best served if, after Caracalla's death, he had declared a Senator emperor instead of himself (Cass. Dio 79.42.2-3).

Macrinus had also violated the correct process in regard to being invested with the imperial titles since he had not waited for the Senate to bestow titles upon him but acted on his own volition (Cass. Dio 79.16.2). The correct process, as described by Dio – who himself had a vested interest in the powers of the Senate – was to wait until they were bestowed on him by the Senate (Cass. Dio 79.16.2). The short-term situation in the east and the tenuous loyalty of the army, however, meant that he perceived that there were more pressing matters requiring his attention than either getting himself to Rome or following the correct protocol.[85]

---

[83] G. Brauer, *The Young Emperors: Rome AD 193-244*, (New York, 1967), p. 105.

[84] ὡς ὑπερήδοντό τε καὶ πανδημεὶ ἑώρταζον ἐπὶ τῇ Ἀντωνίνου ἀπαλλαγῇ.

[85] Brauer (1967), pp. 101-104.

It was hard to expect those men who were promoted by the army to deal with the problems confronting the empire to set out for a city remote from the frontier areas that suffered the incursions. Another problem confronting men such as Maximinus Thrax who had not been brought up as part of the aristocracy was that they would not have had strong connections within those circles to begin with nor the time to cultivate them once they had come to power.[86] However, any man who had risen to high positions in the army would have had connections throughout the social, military and political spheres in the areas in which they had risen to prominence. These people are the ones upon whom the emperors came to rely.[87] The imperial court was not fixed in its location but was present wherever the emperor was and, as they ventured to Rome with less and less frequency, the need for deep roots with the aristocracy of the city became less and less necessary.

While Maximinus Thrax had decided that affairs on the frontiers were more important than promoting himself to the Senate, Trebonianus Gallus felt differently and negotiated peace with the Goths in order to allow himself to return to Rome to establish his power (Zos. 1.24.2-25.1).[88] He was a Senator, so this may explain why his approach was different, although he might also have considered that one of the lessons to be learned from the short rules of Macrinus and Maximinus was that matters in Rome were of greater importance than securing support with the provincial armies by staying on the frontiers and fighting with

[86] Southern (2001), p. 247.

[87] Parker (1935), p. 142. It would have been through such military connexions that Maximinus was able to quell the mutinous plots to replace him with Magnus – see Herodian 7.1.4.

[88] Ταῦτα οὕτως ὁ Γάλλος διῳκηκὼς εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἀφίκετο, μέγα φρονῶν ἐπὶ τῇ τεθείσῃ πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους εἰρήνῃ.

them.[89] Paying for peace, however, was never a particularly popular move with either the army or the Senate since the army wanted success in battle and the booty that went with it, whereas to the Senate such moves smacked of appeasement.

The Goths remained a problem with their raiding across the Danube and the inability of Gallus to be everywhere meant that those suffering invasions took matters into their own hands. The Danubian troops, for example, declared Aemilius Aemilianus emperor (Zos. 1.28.2).[90] Perhaps then the lesson Gallus thought he had learned was the wrong one. However, the problems for Gallus were not merely confined to the Goths. In the east, where the Persians were again threatening, Antoninus was declared emperor.[91] When Aemilius Aemilianus was declared emperor he believed Senatorial approval was important for the stability of his position. To this end he suggested that they should exercise supreme power whilst he commanded the army in battle on the Danube and in the east.[92] This would stabilise his position in those areas he did not control, since the Senate would look after them, and also ensure that the Senate looked kindly upon his regime since his appeasement of them was designed to flatter them and ensure their support. In the areas which he did this he also had the advantage of having

[89] G.C. Brauer, *The Age of the Soldier Emperors: Imperial Rome, A.D. 244-284* (Park Ridge, 1975), p. 58.

[90] αἱρεῖται παρὰ τῶν τῇδε στρατιωτῶν αὐτοκράτωρ.

[91] Southern (2001), p. 76 and pp. 308-309, note 96. The usurpers name according to the coinage is Lucius Julius Sulpicius Antoninus.

[92] H. Mattingly, 'The Reign of Aemilian: A Chronological Note', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 25 (1935), p.57.

had his command ratified by them (Zonar. 12.20). As an idea it would have enhanced his legitimacy but he was not secure enough with the troops whose importance remained paramount and they decided his fate by killing him.[93]

While the emperors still either based themselves in Rome or maintained close ties to the city, the Senate maintained its importance in their legitimation. For example, when Valerian was acclaimed, he sought to have his powers confirmed as soon as his rivals had been eliminated. His son, Gallienus, was also declared Caesar by the Senate (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 32).[94] This shows that there were emperors who believed that there was still a place for the Senate in the high politics of the empire. The Senate were also called upon to ratify the choice of Claudius Gothicus as Gallienus' successor and gave him the name Augustus (Eutr. 9.11). There is no reason to disbelieve that Claudius chose to go through these channels since there is no evidence that Claudius and the Senate had anything other than a good relationship.[95] The appropriation of Claudius' legacy by Constantine, however, does make it difficult to know exactly what was thought of Claudius at the time since later politics dictated that a favourable picture of him needed to emerge.[96]

---

[93] Brauer (1975), p. 67.

[94] Gallienus is also named as being Caesar on milestones from Numidia. See H.G. Pflaum 'P. Licinius Gallienus nobilissimus Caesar et Imp. M. Aurelius Numerianus, à la lumière de deux nouveaux milliaires d'Oum-el-Bouaghi', *Bulletin d'Archéologie Algérienne* 2 (1966), pp. 175-179. Both of these, however, contradict Zos. 1.30.1 which states that Valerian took Gallienus as his colleague.

[95] Brauer (1975), p. 178 and p. 186.

[96] Grant (1993), pp. 26-27.

The final chance the Senate had to show its relevance as an institution involved in the legitimation of imperial regimes came when the troops made it clear, following Aurelian's murder, that they would not proclaim any of his generals as his replacement (*HA Aurel.* 40.2-3 and *Tac.* 2.5). Neither an heir nor marked successor existed so the troops requested that the Senate choose an emperor (*HA Tac.* 2.5).[97] The Senate, uncertain how to take this, hesitated and gave the responsibility back to the soldiery. No longer was the Senate acting as a confident source of authority for the state.[98] Its members were not in a position to command the respect of the troops since most had no involvement with military life but they did still fill some administrative posts in the less volatile parts of the empire, being chosen as *correctors* in Italy, for example. They were also extremely wealthy and, as a consequence, maintained their social prestige.[99]

Eventually after much hesitation the Senate chose Tacitus (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 35-36). There is no evidence to suggest Tacitus had a military background. He was probably an equestrian adlected into the Senate, but he was the last man promoted to the purple by the Senatorial elite.[100] It is believed that there was a resurgence of Senatorial influence under him because he was a Senator, but evidence is lacking so we cannot know for sure whether the Senate as a body saw any of its powers revived and is likely to be a claim for self-importance by the

[97] tunc odio pr<a>esentium exercitus, qui creare imperatorem raptim solebat, ad senatum litteras misit, de quibus priore libro iam dictum est, petens, ut ex ordine suo principem legerent.

[98] Brauer (1975), pp. 239-240.

[99] M.T.W. Arnheim, *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), p. 54.

[100] M. Christol, *L'Empire Romain du IIIe Siècle: histoire politique 192-325 aprés J.-C.* (Paris, 1997), p. 182.

Senatorial authors rather than anything concrete.[101] Even if they were, his reign was too short for any measures he might have taken to be of consequence and there were no Senatorial appointments of great note made.[102] That there was no Senatorial revival could be assumed when his brother, Florian, tried to assume power after his death without waiting for Senatorial approval (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 36/*HA Tac.* 14.1). A revived Senate should have been respected enough by the brother of the man responsible to desire their acceptance before taking on the role.

The short duration of Tacitus' reign and the likelihood that he was assassinated (Zos. 1.63.2) also suggests that he never acquired general support amongst the military. He punished Aurelian's assassins (*HA Tac.* 13.1)[103] which should have enhanced the reputation of his regime since he was avenging the death of a man who was a god. The military, however, had only allowed his appointment because of the disgust they felt at Aurelian's murder (*HA Tac* 2.5-6). His lack of standing amongst the troops and his actions as emperor did not draw any loyalty to him and the experiment with the Senate having the final say over who would be emperor was quickly curtailed (*HA Tac* 13.5-14.2).[104] The fact that no emperor after Tacitus rose from the Senate suggests that its powers had waned, as had its prestige and influence. Its failure to act decisively when asked by the soldiers to nominate Aurelian's replacement removed any aura of authority that it had had as an institution. Any brief resurgence that was perceived from Tacitus' appointment

[101] Watson (1999), p. 112.

[102] Southern (2001), p. 127.

[103] Probus then mopped up those whom Tacitus missed. See *HA Prob.* 13.2 and Zos. 1.65.1-2.

[104] Brauer (1975), p. 241. Florian and Probus were proclaimed by the troops under their command before any Senatorial involvement.

had disappeared by Carus' accession and it never reappeared.[105] Carus took power without acknowledging the Senate in any way (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 38).[106]

Carus, like Maximinus, was not concerned that the Senate may have had the power to de-legitimate him as demonstrated when he chose not to seek the Senate's approval of his accession (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 38). These were men whose rise to prominence came through the military so it made no sense to them to leave the soldiers and take advice from Senators who were inexperienced in the theatre of war.[107] This would quite probably have resulted in them being de-legitimated amongst the soldiers and this would have finished their reigns off even quicker. As it was, it was the failure to maintain his legitimacy with the soldiers which led to Maximinus' assassination (Herodian 8.5.8-9). Carus, however, did not die at another man's hand (Eutr. 9.18), but his son, Carinus, suffered the same de-legitimation as Maximinus and died at the hands of his troops (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). This does show the importance of maintaining the approval of the army with the Senate not being a decisive factor in either Maximinus' or Carinus' deaths. It was not, however, a failure to enrich the soldiers that caused legitimacy problems for either emperor but a failure to maintain strong leadership (Zos 1.14-15/Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39).

---

[105] J. Drinkwater, 'Maximinus to Diocletian and the "Crisis"' in A. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A. Cameron (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd Edition, Vol. 12: The Crisis of Empire AD 193-337*. (Cambridge, 2005), p. 57. Carus did not even seek the approval of the Senate when he was elevated to be emperor by his troops.

[106] Neither source makes any reference to the Senate at all when mentioning Carus' rise.

[107] T. de Quincey, *The Caesars*, (Charleston, 2007), p. 163-164.

The Senate still functioned, however, and did involve itself in imperial politics on the rare occasions it was given the chance. Maxentius was able to be proclaimed as emperor with the support of the Roman Senators and Praetorians (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40) but he was never able to gain recognition from the other emperors and the majority of the army.[108] This means that he was never able to legitimate his regime. Recognition by the army and other members of the imperial college had, at that time, become a more important factor for imperial legitimacy than being the son of a former emperor backed by the Senate as Constantine had already shown when he accepted the title of Caesar from Galerius after the army had pushed for his promotion into the imperial college (*Pan. Lat.* 6(7).8.2).

The Senate no longer provided emperors and no longer filled positions close to the emperor but there is no indisputable evidence that they were explicitly forbidden to hold posts in the government under Diocletian or any emperor prior to him.[109] Gallienus, for example, is accused by Aurelius Victor of banning Senators from army commands (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33.31-34) but whether there was such an official pronouncement or not is the source of debate.[110] What was concrete, however, was that men of this status were no longer being appointed to these positions. Gallienus' relationship with the Senate does not seem to have been excessively strained and they did vote him honours.[111] The security of the

[108] R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, (Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 83-85.

[109] A. Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430*. (London, 1993), p. 41. Epigraphic evidence suggests that they were not excluded but the decentralisation of the time increased the importance of the military at the expense of the Senators.

[110] See Cameron (1993), p. 7 for someone who claims that there was never a formal ban.

[111] L. de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 59.

empire, upon which his own position was dependent, was under threat, however, so there was a need to be practical and use those who would do the best job. These were men who had experience of these or subordinate roles. Times of danger were not times to bow to tradition.

Diocletian was unable or unwilling to go to Rome to have his powers conferred upon him there.[112] The tribes on the Danube provided threats that needed to be met and dealing with these seemed more important than a ceremonial investiture in Rome.[113] At no point in any surviving panegyric does the consent of the Senate rate a mention.[114] Diocletian is another emperor who is accused of having taken the governance of the empire entirely away from the Roman Senate[115] and the circumstances of his rule do show that he spent very little time in Rome at any point during his reign.[116] This is unlikely to have been a deliberate policy from the very outset of his reign and more a case of circumstances.[117] The longer and more established his rule because the less likely he was to have believed that he needed to change what he was doing by consulting and including men as part of his set of

[112] See T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982) pp. 49-56.

[113] Williams (1985), p. 41.

[114] S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, (Berkeley, 1981), p. 169.

[115] Williams (1985), p. 41.

[116] See Barnes (1982) pp. 49-56. Zonar. 12.31 alleges that Diocletian visited Rome in the summer of 285, whilst the only other time which he was known to be in the city was in 303 for his *vicennalia* during November and December.

[117] See Eutr. 9.22, 'disorder thus prevailed throughout the world'. Also see Southern (2001) p. 331. See note 3. Southern believes that it was too early for Diocletian to have formulated a deliberate policy by this time. Williams (1985), p. 41, however, believes that he deliberately did not go to Rome and was seeking to take government away from Rome and exclude Senators from a share of power.

advisors whom he did not know for the sake of mere tradition. These men, afterall, did not comprise those who established his legitimacy, so his legitimacy did not suffer at all as a result of this.[118]

Diocletian rose through the ranks of the army to become emperor and it was to his military cohorts that he turned when seeking other men to promote to share power with him (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). He did not consider turning to the Senate nor did he seek their advice on whom he should appoint, which is understandable since he would want men he knew and trusted to work with him and each other with the goal of achieving the same purpose.[119] When Galerius and Constantius were promoted, their two new Caesars were invested by their respective *Augusti* (Zos. 2.8.1). This legitimised their new position in the Roman state. There is no mention of the Senate being involved in this process and neither is there any evidence that their investitures took place anywhere near Rome.[120]

During the tetrarchy, each emperor established himself in different cities and none of them spent much time in Rome at all.[121] This further removed the Senate from the centre of power in the empire. Galerius, for example, carried out much of his administrative function at Thessalonika and it was there that he erected a triumphal arch to record his exploits.[122] He did not see fit to publicise his

[118] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[119] Southern (2001), p. 147.

[120] Williams (1985), p. 64. Also see Barnes (1982), pp. 60-62.

[121] See Barnes (1982), pp. 49-63 for details of the movements of the four emperors and the cities in which they based themselves.

[122] Rees (2004), p. 14.

successes in such a way at Rome,[123] whereas in days gone by this was the most likely place for an emperor to erect monuments to his success: the edifices of Septimius Severus and Marcus Aurelius were both standing in Rome during Galerius' day.[124] Constantine later also built a triumphal arch but, unlike Galerius, he did choose to erect it in Rome. Constantine, however, was different to the emperors who preceded him. He had redefined what it meant to be a Senator by expanding the Senate and not making them live in Rome or attend the Senate's meetings (Euseb. *Vit. Const.* 4.1). He also created a new Senate for his city at Constantinople,[125] and so formalised the break from Rome which had been a reality for half a century or more.

Conclusions

The authoritative source which legitimised emperors, therefore, was the army. The Senate did have a role to play but its will was subordinate to that of the army throughout the third century.[126] The enrichment of the soldiers was one of the ways in which an emperor could secure the approval of the soldiers, with Didius Julianus the most notorious example. This was not the only means of gaining the army's support, however, as they also promoted men such as Maximinus Thrax

[123] N.H. Ramage and A. Ramage, *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine* (London, 1995), pp. 274-275.

[124] See R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 30-31 for some discussion of monuments and triumphal arches.

[125] C. Kelly, 'Bureaucracy and Government' in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Cambridge, 2006. p. 197.

[126] Hammond (1956), p. 63.

and Diocletion who were career soldiers who were well known to the army and Constantine whose standing as Constantius' son drew support towards him.

As time passed the problems which confronted the empire on the frontiers pulled the emperors away from Rome and they rarely returned. For example, during Septimius' long rule he spent a great deal of time in Rome dealing with affairs of state there, whereas Diocletian rarely set foot in the city in spite of ruling for even longer. He was not, however, the first to base himself elsewhere. Neither Macrinus nor Maximinus had entered Rome during their reign. While neither were successful in maintaining their position, they did survive for a couple of years which showed that an emperor could rule away from Rome provided they ruled well. Unfortunately, neither of these men did so, with the severity of Maximinus' administration causing an uprising in Africa (Herodian 7.4.2). The most significant blow for Rome's status as the centre of the empire was Diocletian's tetrarchy.[127] The four emperors all chose to establish themselves in cities closer to the frontiers and so the process which had seen a succession of emperors spend less and less time in Rome came to its conclusion.[128] Once Constantine established a new court and Senate at Constantinople, Rome was merely a symbolic heart for the empire and not administratively or militarily important.[129]

[127] Cameron (1993), pp. 42-43.

[128] Barnes (1982), p. 47

[129] R. Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 57-58.

The consequence of the departure of the emperors was that the Senate became removed from the decision making process and this included imperial legitimation. The Senate was still filled with wealthy men with social prestige and its august standing as a traditionally powerful body did mean that it continued to make an impression when it could. After Tacitus, however, this was limited to Maxentius who was desperately searching for any allies he could find. In spite of the Senate's support, he never received formal recognition as a legitimate emperor because the Senate did not have any sway in this regard any longer. The army continued to make and break emperors, who eventually did not even bother to seek recognition of their status from the Senate before settling into their role.

Chapter 3: Traditional Legitimacy

The position of emperor had been established for over two centuries by the time Septimius made his bid for power. The emperor was expected to come from a Senatorial background but having this background was not necessarily always enough in itself to ensure on-going legitimacy as the short reigns of Balbinus and Maximus Pupienus, amongst others, showed (Zos 1.14.2).[1] This was because of the common belief in the tradition that the emperor would come from the Senatorial class.[2] Coming from the traditionally accepted background might help gain a level of support in the short term but in the longer-term it was the emperor's performance in his role that mattered and those that were quickly overthrown, as Balbinus and Pupienus Maximus were, show this (Herodian 7.10.3-8.8.8). This is because obedience is only given to the emperor when he is bound by traditions which the role demands.[3] Therefore, failure to fulfill the traditional expectations led to a dissipation in belief about the individual's ability to lead and a withdrawal of support.[4] The imperial institution, however, remained strong and the next emperor was expected to act within the same traditional expectations.[5]

---

[1] M. Weber. *Sociological Writings*. (New York, 1994a), p. 31.

[2] Weber (1994a), p. 31. The common belief in the tradition is what makes this customary in Rome and, therefore, is an aspect of legitimacy in the traditional sense.

[3] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[4] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[5] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

During the course of the century there was a shift away from those from the Senate and towards those who had risen through the army.[6] This was initially met with derision by the Senatorial sources, but the protests dissipate as the century progresses. This is most likely due to the paucity of source material rather than a growing acceptance that the military nature of the position called for someone who had been shown to be capable in this area.[7] This had, after all, always been a necessary role for a successful emperor but it was especially the case as the third century progressed and the pressure on Rome's borders increased.[8] The increasing amounts of time which the emperors spent dealing with trouble-spots was the reason that the army had overtly taken over as the most important agent when proclaiming an emperor as legitimate.[9]

Traditions had been established by the third century which meant that the emperor was expected to perform certain roles in the military, political, judicial and religious spheres.[10] He was expected to show due deference to the gods and the laws but maintaining the security of the empire and the safety of its people was his primary function and it was this which usually determined the success or

[6] M. Burger, *The Shaping of Western Civilization: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, (Toronto, 2008), p. 131.

[7] A. Dihle. *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire: from Augustus to Justinian*, trans. M. Malzahn, (London, 1994), p. 361.

[8] Dihle (1994), pp. 360-361.

[9] C.S. Mackay, *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History*, (Cambridge, 2004), p.280.

[10] A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Emperor and His Virtues', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1981. Vol. 30, No. 3, p. 300. The virtues of the emperor are *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas*. *Virtus* can be displayed through the success of his armies in keeping the empire safe. *Clementia* was a political and judicial virtue as was *iustitia*. An emperor's *pietas* displayed his suitability for the imperial role in the religious sphere.

failure of a regime. Septimius (Aur. Vict, *Caes*, 20) provides an example of one who did maintain the empire's security. This was the overriding aim of most emperors and the success they enjoyed enhanced the status of their regime. Failure often resulted in a crisis of legitimacy which could then lead to the overthrow of the regime. The short reign of Gallus shows the effects of failure (Zos 1.26.1-1.28.3).[11] Regimes during this time were generally focused on fighting internal and external enemies. Emperors still did try to ensure the health of the Roman economy, however, but the main way they did so was to take the short-term measure of debasing the coinage which only resulted in increases in inflation.[12] By doing this, they were trying to show that they were capable of maintaining the security of the empire and, consequently, they could maintain the legitimacy of their regime.[13]

[11] Ἐν τούτοις δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων ὄντων, καὶ τῶν κρατούντων οὐδαμῶς οἵων τε ὄντων ἀμῦναι τῷ πολιτεύματι, πάντα δὲ τὰ τῆς Ῥώμης ἔξω περιορώντων, αὖθις Γότθοι καὶ Βορανοὶ καὶ Οὐρουγοῦνδοι καὶ Κάρποι τὰς κατὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην ἐλήζοντο πόλεις, εἴ τι περιλελειμμένον ἦν οἰκειούμενοι. Πέρσαι δὲ τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐπῆσαν, τήν τε μέσην καταστρεφόμενοι τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ Συρίαν προϊόντες ἄχρι καὶ Ἀντιοχείας αὐτῆς, ἕως εἶλον καὶ ταύτην τῆς ἑῴας πάσης μητρόπολιν οὖσαν, καὶ τοὺς μὲν κατασφάξαντες τῶν οἰκητόρων τοὺς δὲ αἰχμαλώτους ἀπαγαγόντες ἅμα λείας ἀναριθμήτῳ πλήθει οἴκαδε ἀπῆεσαν, πᾶν ὁτιοῦν ἴδιον ἢ δημόσιον τῆς πόλεως οἰκοδόμημα διαφθείραντες, οὐδενὸς παντάπασιν ἀντιστάντος· Πέρσαις μὲν οὖν ἐξεγένετο ῥᾳδίως τὴν Ἀσίαν κατακτήσασθαι πᾶσαν, εἰ μὴ τῇ τῶν λαφύρων ὑπερβολῇ περιχαρεῖς γεγονότες ἀσμένως ταῦτα περισῶσαι καὶ ἀπαγαγεῖν οἴκοι δεινοήθησαν. ... πολλῷ τὸν Γάλλον ἐλαττούμενον ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ὁρῶντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἅμα πρὸς τὸ ἐκμελὲς καὶ ἀνειμένον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀποβλέποντες, ἀναιροῦσιν αὐτὸν μετὰ τοῦ παιδός,

[12] G. Hodgett, *A Social and Economic History of Medieval Europe*, (Abingdon, 2006), p. 37.

[13] Weber (1994a), p. 31. Maintaining the empire's security was a common belief about the emperor's role amongst the emperor's subjects.

All of these roles the emperor was expected to play had roots deeper than the imperial period, with the emperor expected to fulfil roles that consuls and *pontifices* would have performed in Republican times.[14] These positions still existed and were often taken on by the emperors but the consulship, when held by non-emperors, no longer had the same expectations of leading the Roman state and armies that it once had because this role had been subsumed by the emperors.[15]

In the first half of the third century, the emperors followed tradition and tried to win favour in the city of Rome. Even emperors who were unable to be present in the city at the time of their accession, such as Elagabalus (Herodian 5.5.6)[16] and Maximinus Thrax (*HA Max.* 12.10),[17] promoted themselves by sending pictures to the Senate. In the case of Elagabalus, who took many months to get there, this also served the purpose of preparing those in the city for his coming (Herodian 5.5.6-7). The portraits showed him in his priestly attire, which was not what a traditional Roman priest would wear, and it allowed them to become accustomed to what they were going to see (Herodian 5.5.6-7). Maximinus was another who sent pictures and reports to the Senate in order to promote his success in battle

[14] C. King, 'Roman Portraiture: Images of Power?' in G.M. Paul and M. Ierardi (eds.), *Roman Coins and Public Life under the Empire: E. Togo Salmon Papers II*. (Ann Arbor, 2002), p. 127.

[15] G. Mousourakis, *A Legal History of Rome*, (Abingdon, 2007), p. 88.

[16] βουλόμενος ἐν ἕθει γενέσθαι τῆς τοῦ σχήματος ὄψεως τήν τε σύγκλητον καὶ τὸν δῆμον Ῥωμαίων, ἀπόντος τε αὐτοῦ πεῖραν δοθῆναι πῶς φέρουσι τὴν ὄψιν τοῦ σχήματος, εἰκόνα μεγίστην γράψας παντὸς ἑαυτοῦ, οἷος προϊών τε καὶ ἱερουργῶν ἐφαίνετο, παραστήσας τε ἐν τῇ γραφῇ τὸν τύπον τοῦ ἐπιχωρίου θεοῦ, ᾧ δὴ καλλιερῶν ἐγέγραπτο

[17] iussit praeterea tabulas pingi ita, ut erat bellum ipsum gestum, et ante curiam proponi, ut facta eius pictura loqueretur.

(Herodian 7.2.8) although he was less inclined to head for the city in person, doing so only when the Senate had turned away from him and appointed the Gordians as emperors (Herodian 7.7.2).[18] In sending the pictures he was also following what Septimius had done when he had commissioned paintings to celebrate his success in Parthia (Herodian 3.9.12)[19] and publicise his achievements even though he had not yet been able to return from the east.[20]

Later, however, emperors came to realise that presenting themselves in the city and before the Senate was irrelevant for their status. Carus, for example, made no effort to go to Rome and Diocletian spent little time there during his twenty year reign, going only to celebrate his *vicennalia* before leaving quickly after receiving an underwhelming reception (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 17).[21] Events had shown that acceptance by Rome did not make or break an emperor so this was a tradition that could afford to be broken given the lack of military muscle which the Senate could flex. The performance of the imperial duties, regardless of where the emperor physically was, however, remained a high priority.[22]

---

[18] Herodian states that τὰς δὲ τοῦ Μαξιμίνου τιμὰς ἀνατρέπουσι as well as giving the title of Σεβαστοὺς (*Augusti*) to the Gordians.

[19] τούτων δὲ αὐτῷ δεξιῶς καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν εὐχὴν προχωρησάντων ἐπέστειλε τῇ τε συγκλήτῳ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ, τάς τε πράξεις μεγαληγορῶν, τὰς μάχας τε καὶ τὰς νίκας δημοσίαις ἀνέθηκε γραφαῖς.

[20] C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2000), p. 137. Paintings traditionally had formed part of a triumph. Although little is known about Maximinus' background and early years, he was a career soldier is likely to have been in the army throughout Septimius' reign. He, therefore, may have known that Septimius had had his success celebrated in this way.

[21] D.L. Vagi, *Coinage and History of the Roman Empire*, (Chicago, 2000), pp. 419-420.

[22] O. Heckster with N. Zair, N. *Rome and its Empire: AD 193-284*. (Edinburgh, 2008), pp. 61-64.

The most important functions of the emperor were to ensure the safety of the people of the empire and bring glory to Rome. Both of these called for military success. Although not necessarily expected to lead the troops in person, the emperor was responsible for taking decisive action to deal with any threats that presented themselves.[23] He also had to ensure that the troops were paid and fed. Diocletian's edict stipulating maximum prices for goods, for example, was concerned with ensuring the army was adequately supplied and that, by not paying excessive amounts for supplies, there was still money left with which to pay the troops.[24] Troops developed loyalty to those who fulfilled these functions and failing to keep their loyalty would end badly for the de-legitimated emperor, with Macrinus' attempt to pay new recruits less than Caracalla had done causing disaffection which contributed to his de-legitimation (Cass. Dio 79.28.2).[25] It was not only those whom the sources treat badly, such as Maximinus Thrax and Caracalla, who suffered because of troop dissatisfaction, but also emperors who were well regarded, such as Severus Alexander (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 24) and Probus (Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 37). Signs of weakness, such as Alexander's failure to live up to the expectations of the military, undermined his authority (Herodian 6.9.5).[26]

De-legitimated emperors found that the legions would desert them in favour of generals who the troops believed were credible leaders,[27] such as had occurred to

[23] J.B. Campbell, *War and Society in Imperial Rome 31 BC – AD 284*. (London, 2002), pp. 41-42.

[24] T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, (Cambridge, Mass. 1981), p. 11.

[25] S. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate*, (Berkeley, 2002), p. 140.

[26] F. Meijer, *Emperors Don't Die in Bed*, (London, 2004), p. 81.

[27] P. Southern, *The Roman Empire From Severus to Constantine* (London, 2001), p. 269. It did help their credibility if they could pass a lot of cash around but success on the battlefield was also

Severus Alexander. This also occurred about fifteen years later when Trebonianus Gallus' army killed him, whom they regarded as lax and cowardly, rather than face Aemilianus' superior forces (Zos. 1.28.3).[28] Probus, on the other hand, de-legitimated himself in the eyes of his soldiers by declaring there would be no need for an army (Eutr. 9.17.3).[29] The army saw it differently. With that attitude, they saw no need for Probus. At times, emperors could foresee the problems confronting them and chose not to test the loyalty of their own troops.[30] Galerius, for example, did not take on Maxentius because he was unsure that the troops under his command would be loyal to him (Zos. 2.10.3).[31] These troops had previously served under Maximian, Maxentius' father, and their loyalty to Maximian was partly responsible for the defeat of Severus in Italy.[32] Faced with the same situation, Galerius saw no benefit in risking his own legitimacy and chose to withdraw from Italy, so ignoring Maxentius' presence rather than confronting it (Zos. 2.10.3).

---

extremely important.

[28] πολλῷ τὸν Γάλλον ἐλαττούμενον ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ὁρῶντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἅμα πρὸς τὸ ἐκμελὲς καὶ ἀνειμένον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀποβλέποντες, ἀναιροῦσιν αὐτὸν μετὰ τοῦ παιδός.

[29] Hic cum bella innumera gessisset, pace parata dixit brevi milites necessarios non futuros. Vir acer, strenuus, iustus et qui Aurelianum aequaret gloria militari, morum autem civilitate superaret. Interfectus tamen est Sirmii tumultu militari in turri ferrata.

[30] R.M. Novak, *Christianity and the Roman Empire: Background Texts*, (Harrisburg, 2001), p. 143.

[31] γενόμενος δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν καὶ τοὺς στρατιώτας οὐ πιστῶς περὶ αὐτὸν ἔχειν αἰσθόμενος ἐπὶ τὴν ἑῴαν ἀνέζευξεν, μάχης οὐδεμιᾶς γενομένης.

[32] F. Paschoud, ed. and trans., *Zosime: Histoire Nouvelle Tome 1 (Livres I et II)* (Paris, 1971), p. 195 note 15. Zosimus claims that they were bribed (Zos. 2.10.1) and this also no doubt helped. The troops, however, would have trusted Maxentius because their experience and their faith in him as an emperor and commander meant that they could trust him to come up with the money promised.

Those emperors who maintained their legitimacy throughout their reigns, such as Septimius and Diocletian, enjoyed early military successes over foreign tribes which allowed them to claim they were protecting the Roman state.[33] Septimius, for example, was successful against the Arabians, Adiabeni and Osrhoeni after defeating Niger (Cass. Dio 75.1.1-3.3). This was in response to Nisibis being beseiged (Cass. Dio 75.1.2) and showed that he was not prepared to tolerate incursions against Roman forces. It also sent a message to his own people that he would be a strong leader, prepared to defend Roman interests. Septimius had showed that he could and would defend the empire. Both of these emperors enjoyed periods of relative quiet which allowed them to promote their success and the peace which it brought. Septimius, for example, between the success against Parthia, from which he had returned to Rome via Africa, and his final campaigns in Britain, was unchallenged militarily.[34] Septimius was able to extend the boundaries of the empire in every direction[35] and so not only ensured the security of the empire but also added to his own glory. During this time he did face a threat to his authority but this was not a military threat: it appeared in the form of his friend and Praetorian Prefect, Plautianus. This threat, however, was quelled with Plautianus' execution.[36] Dio (76.14.1-76.16.5) and Herodian (3.11.2-3) both dwell on the vast power that Plautianus acquired but that this did not actually threaten

[33] See A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social and Administrative Survey*, (Oxford, 1973), pp. 38-39 lists the early successes of Diocletian and Maximian while pp. 15-16 discusses the rise of Septimius.

[34] K. Gilliver, A.K. Goldsworthy and M. Whitby, *Rome at War: Caesar's Legacy*, (Oxford, 2005), p. 12.

[35] A. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London, 1971), p. 285.

[36] M. Grant, *The Severans: The Changed Roman Empire* (London, 1996), pp. 15-16.

Septimius' own legitimacy is shown by the ease with which he was removed and the lack of disquiet that his removal caused.[37] Septimius remained firmly in control and his position was not in dispute at any time during Plautianus' ascendency.[38] Septimius, therefore, still had the support of the people, the Senate and the army.[39]

Diocletian and Maximian, like all emperors, faced problems on the frontiers (see *Pan Lat* 10(2).5.1-4 and 11(3).4.2 for examples). They were successful but did lose control of Britain to the usurper, Carausius (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39).[40] The victories over the tribes along the Rhine and Danube, however, meant that there were successes to promote the stability they were able to bring to the empire. They also met in Milan in 291, possibly to show the solidarity of their regime, advertise their unity and promote their achievements (*Pan. Lat.* 11(3).11.1-4).[41] This would have been meant to have a reassuring effect on the people to show that, although there were two legitimate emperors, they were not competing with one another but rather complementing each other to ensure that security was maintained. Traditionally Rome was where this meeting should have occurred, but

---

[37] B. Levick,. *Julia Domna: Syrian Princess*. (London, 2007), pp. 80-81.

[38] D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395*, (London, 2004), pp. 118-119. Even though Plautianus was extremely powerful, Septimius was still firmly enough in control to be able to have some of his statues melted down when he thought that Plautianus was being a little too ostentatious with his displays of his power (Cass. Dio 75.16.2).

[39] Birley (1971), pp. 162-163.

[40] Quo bello Carausius, ... Hoc elatior, cum barbarum multos opprimeret neque praedae omnia in aerarium referret, Herculii metu, a quo se caedi iussum compererat, Britanniam hausto imperio capessivit.

[41] R. Rees, *Layers of Loyalty in the Latin Panegyric AD 289-307*. (Oxford, 2002), p.69.

it no longer mattered where they met to do this.[42] Rome was a long way from the edges of the empire where the emperors were needed to deal with any outbreaks of trouble.[43]

Diocletian moved about throughout his reign, as did the other tetrarchs, and the advantage of this can be seen when there were military problems to deal with. Victor states that the Caesars, Constantius and Galerius, were appointed in order to deal with the disturbances that were occurring both inside and outside of the empire (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). When they were needed there was always an emperor available to confront the problems and the speed with which this could be done could prevent any incursions doing too much damage before they were challenged. Galerius, for example, was charged with dealing with any Persian incursions (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). Ultimately, in spite of some initial problems, he was successful and the treaty which his victory resulted in led to almost forty years of peace.[44] The military success of the tetrarchs, both in terms of the organisation of the army and the successes on the battlefield, stabilised the frontiers of the empire and enhanced the ability of the empire to deal with its enemies.[45]

---

[42] F. Millar, H.M. Cotton and G. Rogers, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East: Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire*, (Chapel Hill, 2004), p. 375.

[43] P.J. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: a new history of Rome and the Barbarians*, (Oxford, 2006) p. 25.

[44] M. Whitby, *Rome at War: AD 293-696*, (Oxford, 2002), pp. 34-36. After Galerius' success in 298, it was not until near the end of Constantine's reign that Persia and Rome again became engaged in serious conflict.

[45] S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. (London, 1985), p. 87.

The emperor who had the most trouble keeping the empire together was Gallienus. For the duration of his reign he had to deal with external threats to the empire and it was these which led to internal strife which resulted in the fragmentation of the empire. Zosimus (1.36.1-38.2) catalogues invasions of Illyricum by Scythians, Germanic wars and a devastating plague as well as a series of usurpations occurring in the aftermath of Valerian's capture by the Persians (also see Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33). Consequently, unlike Septimius and Diocletian, he was never in a position to take the attack to the enemy and he certainly never enjoyed relative peace during which he could consolidate his status.[46] When he did take some time away from the battlefront he was accused of neglecting his duties (Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 33).[47] His entire reign was one of defending his lot as best he could and this was itself difficult because he was prevented from accessing the resources of the whole of the empire because of the fragmentation which had occurred.[48] Postumus' presence in Gaul, for example, meant that Gallienus was locked out of that region from about 260 (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33).

Gallienus' response to this was to try to maintain the loyalty of the troops still under his command and face each threat as best he could.[49] To this end, he opened up the possibility of a career in the army that could lead to promotion through to

[46] Meijer (2004), pp. 96-97.

[47] See *HA*, *Gall.*, 11.2-9 and 16.1 as well as Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 33 for examples of the distaste that these sources felt towards Gallienus. Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 33 states that *inter haec ipse popinas ganeasque obiens lenonum ac vinariorum amicitiis haerebat, expositus Saloninae coniugi atque amori flagitioso filiae Attali Germanorum regis, Pipae nomine*.

[48] Meijer (2004), p. 98.

[49] L. de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden, 1976), p. 117.

positions that gave equestrian and Senatorial status.[50] Although disaffection with Gallienus resulted in his removal, Claudius did not immediately set about changing his military, social or financial policies. This does suggest Gallienus' reign was not as bad as sources, such as Eutropius (9.8 and 9.11) and Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 33) make out.[51] He was also successful in maintaining the loyalty of the troops, as was shown when he was killed and they provided the only resistance to Claudius Gothicus' accession. They were distressed at Gallienus' death because he was the man who bankrolled them (*HA. Gall.* 15.1). As was usually the case, however, money soothed their angst, as Claudius stepped forward to be their new benefactor (*HA Gall.* 15.2).[52] The broadening of possibilities for soldiers can be seen by the men who became emperor in the fifty years before and after Gallienus. Whereas the non-Senatorial emperors, such as Macrinus and Maximinus, were the exception before, this was not so afterwards with only Tacitus not rising from the ranks of the army before the Constantinian dynasty.[53] This, therefore, suggests that the pathway to the imperial purple was no longer occurring in this traditional way and emperors from outside the Senatorial aristocracy were reliant on different degrees of backing to secure their rule. The Senate, for example, was not as important to these men as to those who were from

[50] See de Blois (1976), p. 43, 52-57, 63-64 and 86-87.

[51] Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 33.29) describes Gallienus as *cum neque Gallieni flagitia, ... occultari queant, et, quisque pessimus erit, par similisque semper ipsi habebitur.* He cannot understand why Claudius would have forced the Senate to have deified such a man. Eutropius (9.8) decries his descent *in omnem lasciviam* and his *ignavia* as well as (in 9.11) accusing him of *rem publicam deserente*.

[52] quare consilium principum fuit, ut milites eius quo solent placari genere sedarentur. promissis itaque per Marcianum aureis vicenis et acceptis.

[53] G. Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome*, (Beckenham, 1985), p. 166.

that strata of society. As army commanders, they did not by this time have this traditional Senatorial background on their side but they were still using the traditional powers of a Roman leader. This shows that within any form of legitimate authority there were different components which it could comprise and changes could occur over time.[54]

Success over a foreign enemy was expected from an emperor and added to his prestige. Septimius' response to defeating Niger was to change the focus from civil to foreign war by taking on the Parthians.[55] Although the Romans had justifiable reasons for going to war in the east because the Osroeni and Adiabeni had been besieging Nisibis (Cass. Dio 75.1.2), the war with Parthia was not Septimius' primary reason for having headed east. It did provide a good excuse, however, once he had defeated Niger since it was far more honorable to fight an external foe than to fight other Romans for imperial power and so served its purpose as a public relations exercise since he was able to claim he expanded the empire (Cass. Dio 75.3.2). Fighting a foreign enemy was also a traditional means which Roman commanders had used to boost their standing and, consequently, success against the Parthians was a means of securing his legitimacy.[56] He again undertook this role when he took on the Parthians after Albinus had been

[54] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[55] P. Edwell and P.M. Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia: the Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman Control*, (Abingdon, 2008), p. 26.

[56] For example, Augustus had sought a foreign enemy after the civil wars and this is what Septimius was also seeking to do. D.E.E. Kleiner, *Cleopatra and Rome*, (Cambridge, Mass, 2005), p. 42.

removed,[57] although he again could justify going to war with Parthia because they had occupied Mesopotamia and besieged Nisibis (Cass. Dio 76.9.1). This again changed the focus to an external foe, away from the defeat of a fellow Roman and the punishment meted out on his supporters. The punishments were again a traditional response by a victorious general with Sulla and Augustus, during the second triumvirate, providing the historical examples which Septimius used (Cass. Dio 76.8.1).

Other emperors who had come to power as a result of successfully challenging the incumbent emperor included Maximinus (Zos. 1.13.1)[58] and Diocletian (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39).[59] These men were all in some way able to fulfill the emperor's traditional role, at least in the short term. One of Diocletian's first tasks had been to restore internal law and order in the provinces that had suffered the frequent invasions (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). A number of rescripts survive from throughout his reign which provide evidence of Diocletian's interest in legal proceedings.[60] The legislative functions that an emperor was expected to carry out were important, especially for the judgement of the Senators such as Dio (see Cass. Dio 77.17.2 for example) who wrote the histories.[61]

---

[57] Birley (1971), p. 200.

[58] τραπέντα δὲ εἰς νεωτερισμὸν ἄγει Μαξιμῖνον εἰς βασιλείαν.

[59] At Carinus ubi Moesiam contigit, illico Marcum iuxta Diocletiano congressus, dum victos avide premeret, suorum ictu interiit, quod libidine impatiens militarium multas affectabat, quarum infestiores viri iram tamen doloremque in eventum belli distulerant.

[60] S. Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284-324* (Oxford, 1996), p. 1.

[61] Dihle (1994), pp. 348-349.

Septimius diligently fulfilled the legislative role expected of an emperor and, consequently, Dio is full of praise for his interest in the law and his willingness to listen to those speaking in court and his advisers (Cass. Dio 77.17.2) – all of whom were men from the right social background of course. The pronouncements of Septimius and Diocletian form the basis of the laws that were codified by Diocletian and the later emperors, Theodosius and Justinian.[62] Both Septimius and Diocletian, therefore, enjoyed long reigns with periods of relative stability compared with those ruling between them. This is what gave them an opportunity to step away from matters of the military and the security of the empire and enhance their own positions through their diligent attention to their administrative and judicial roles

The abundance of emperors to deal with the external threats meant that the political climate during Diocletian's tetrarchy was stable enough to tackle some of the problems which he perceived were afflicting the empire such as the size of the provinces (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 7.4). In order to make it easier to administer and defend, he reorganised the military departments of the empire[63] and began the separation of military and civil posts, which became clearly identifiable during the fourth century, in recognition of the trend for men to specialise in one of these branches.[64] Even though some of his measures proved unsuccessful – the price edict, for example, seems to have been unworkable in practice (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 7.5-7) – he was trying to make things work better. The attention Diocletian

[62] Corcoran (1996), pp. 1-4.

[63] P. Erdkamp, *A Companion to the Roman Army*, (Malden, 2007), pp. 268.

[64] R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, (Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 26-27.

paid to the reorganisation of administration of the empire, therefore, highlights that emperors paid attention to matters that benefited more than just the army. Even if the good of the army may have been behind such changes, there was still a reorganisation of the civil administration in order to try to make it more effective which would have benefited the people as a whole. In this regard he was fulfilling the traditional role expected of the emperor who was expected to be a diligent administrator. Since this was one of the customary expectations of an emperor, it was, consequently, an aspect of his legitimacy.[65]

Most of the other emperors, to varying extents, tried to govern the empire with the diligence that was expected and ensure that there were sufficient supplies for their armies. This was even the case of those quickly deposed and condemned for trying to ensure adequate money for the army to be supplied, such as Maximinus (Herodian 7.3.1-6). Success in battle was a primary concern of all and those who did succeed managed to maintain their position. The legal and administrative functions were not forgotten either, although inflation became increasingly uncontrollable by the end of the century and no emperor could think of adequate measures to rein it back in.[66] Such issues, however, did not adversely affect their legitimation as fiscal mechanisms were not something which were understood in the ancient world and were, consequently, accepted as something which very little could be done about.

[65] Weber (1994a), p. 31

[66] A. Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Cenrury*, (London, 1999), p. 126.

It was often the case, however, that emperors had to put administrators and administrative procedures into place whilst they were under pressure to confront the external threats to the empire. Decius, for example, had very little time to settle into his role before having to fight the Carpi in Dacia (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 29).[67] He used the men he knew in the Senate to look after the civil administration in Rome whilst he was away with the army. His younger son, Hostilianus, was left in Rome with Valerian as the regime's representative (Zonar. 12.20). The turmoil on the outer edges of the empire, however, was replicated in Rome where the mob tried to make Licinianus emperor (Cyprian *Ep.* 55). Without an army to support him he was not legitimated but the attempt showed that Decius' own legitimacy was not firmly secure either in spite of his attempts to ensure that he confronted the external threat to the empire and, at the same time, looked after the administration.

Decius' death in battle occurred before his regime had a chance to establish itself firmly and the legions quickly proclaimed Trebonianus Gallus emperor, ignoring any claims that Hostilianus may have had to the succession (Zos. 1.24.1-1.25.1). Gallus' own legitimacy was threatened by the pressure of external invasions which led to the troops on the Danube declaring an emperor of their own (Zos. 1.28.2).[68] Gallus sent for Valerian to help to deal with Aemilianus' usurpation, but

[67] Decius' son, Etruscus, was sent to fight as soon as he had been appointed Caesar, whilst Decius followed him after he had finished dedicating the public works he had had built. He only ruled for two years and was away fighting the Carpi well before he was killed, so any administrative changes he had made would have had little time to consolidate before the end of his reign.

[68] Καὶ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀνελών, ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκείνων γῆν τοὺς στρατιώτας διαβιβάσας καὶ παραδόξως πᾶν τὸ προσπεσὸν διαφθείρας, παρὰ πᾶσάν τε ἐλπίδα τὰ Ῥωμαίοις ὑπήκοα τῆς

this did not prove any use since his own troops realised the weakness of their position because of the strength of Aemilianus' numbers and consequently murdered both Gallus and his son, Volusianus (Zos. 1.28.3). In this regard his situation matched that of Philip the Arab somewhat when the troops were defeated by Decius and went over to his side (Zos 1.22.2). Gallus, therefore, in the eyes of the troops, had been thoroughly discredited.

Earlier, Macrinus, although in the east campaigning, had tried to ensure the good governance of the empire by installing men he knew and trusted, such as Marcius Agrippa and Decius Triccianus, as governors (Cass. Dio 79.13.2-4). Macrinus was an experienced administrator, whom Dio would no doubt have known, who knew how the empire functioned and was not prepared to neglect this function in spite of the problems that the Parthians were presenting him.[69] There is insufficient evidence from many of the reigns during this period to generalise that all of the emperors took an active interest on maintaining the legal form expected of them but it can be suspected that this disinclination to give adverse comment by the sources means that this task was performed as expected.[70] The reason for suspecting this was that Senatorial authors were quick to condemn an emperor when they did breach the correct legal protocols. When Elagabalus, for example, sanctioned the deaths of Senators, he was condemned by Dio (80.4.6), who no doubt reflected the attitude of the majority of his class.[71]

ἐκείνων μανίας ἐλευθερώσας, αἱρεῖται παρὰ τῶν τῇδε στρατιωτῶν αὐτοκράτωρ

[69] F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford, 1964), p. 161.

[70] Corcoran (1996), p. 3. In the period between the death of Ulpian in 223 up to the time of Diocletian, private rescripts were the main legal means used by emperors.

[71] Zos. 1.11.1, Eutr. 8.22 and Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 23 all mention Elagabalus briefly and decry his

It was sometimes necessary for an emperor to deal with problems for which they did not have the resources. Parthia was such a problem for Macrinus (Herodian 4.15.7-8). Caracalla's dithering had led to dissatisfaction with him, but there was little money in the treasury due to Caracalla's extravagance and Artabanus took advantage by attacking during the instability which was a consequence of Caracalla's demise (Herodian 4.14.6-15.1). In order to extract himself from it with as much credit as possible Macrinus had not ended the war as soon as he had become emperor, but the reverses that he suffered meant that he was left with little option. A negotiated settlement from a position of weakness led to some territory being lost and an indemnity being paid to the Persian king (Cass. Dio 79.27.1-3). This was another problem that Macrinus had which meant that his regime was not on solid ground.[72] He was awarded the title, *Parthicus Maximus*, on the basis of the reports he sent back to the Senate, but refused it because, according to Dio he was ashamed to take a victory title when there had not been a victory (Cass. Dio 79.27.3).

Maximinus, on the other hand, prosecuted the war against the Germans with vigour, according to Herodian (7.2.1-9) and so showed that he was the man of action that Severus Alexander had not been, which had resulted in the rebellion against him.[73] This was to his credit but the resources he needed to prosecute the war had to come from somewhere. Consequently, he had to exact money from the

depravity.

[72] G. Rawlinson, *Parthia*, (New York, 2007), p. 357.

[73] T.E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium*, (Malden, 2010), p. 25.

people of the empire and this led to dissatisfaction.[74] The frontiers had been secured but his fiscal policy caused unrest to build up against him (Herodian 7.3.5).[75] This lack of concern for anything other than the stability of the frontiers and the favour of the army, however, did not contribute to his regime being able to maintain sufficient support to retain its legitimacy.[76] The army's need for money resulted in charges of greed, corruption and cruelty being levelled at him by Herodian (Herodian 7.3.5 and 7.4.1-3) and the *Historia Augusta* (*HA Max.* 8.5 and 13.5) since those outside the army saw or felt the financial burden which his policies inflicted.[77] Traditionally, the emperor was expected to provide sound administration for the empire and there was an expectation that his appointees would help to strengthen not hinder his regime in the way Maximinus' procurator did in the district of Carthage (Herodian 7.4.2).[78] Failure to provide the requisite administrative leadership, therefore, contributed to Maximinus' de-legitimation (Herodian 7.3.1-6). Despising all others and concentrating on pleasing the troops was not a successful route to a long rule.

Maximinus also faced the problem of not having risen to his station from the right background. He was not the first to have done so and, although Dio praises Macrinus for his actions as emperor, he does state that he should have handed

[74] J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 26-27.

[75] R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (Oxford, 1971), p. 190. Herodian states that even distinguished families were reduced to poverty, ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ Μαξιμῖνος τοὺς πλείστους τῶν ἐνδόξων οἴκων ἐς πενίαν περιστήσας.

[76] Burckhardt (1983), pp. 27-28.

[77] Burckhardt (1983), pp. 27-28.

[78] ἐπετρόπευέ τις τῆς Καρχηδονίας χῶρας τραχύτατα, καὶ μετὰ πάσης ὠμότητος καταδίκας τε ἐποιεῖτο καὶ χρημάτων εἰσπράξεις

power to someone of suitable standing. Dio states that this failure was his main failing (Cass. Dio 79.14.2). Tradition decreed that Rome's leaders came from the Senatorial class and Macrinus was the first emperor who was not from the Senatorial aristocracy.[79] Macrinus struggled to maintain his legitimacy in part because his rival had the better bloodline on which to draw. He did try to establish links to the previous regime and gave the name Severus and titles *Pius Felix Augustus* to himself (Cass. Dio 79.16.2). Elagabalus followed Macrinus' example and made himself *Imperator Caesar*, son of Antoninus, grandson of Severus, and *Pius Felix Augustus* (Cass. Dio 80.2.2). These titles linked both men to Septimius and, therefore, Caracalla and so linked them into a Senatorial bloodline (Cass. Dio 80.2.2). Elagabalus was at least related to these Severan emperors (Herodian 5.3.2). He was also linked to the Antonines in accordance with the fiction begun by Septimius. Elagabalus went one step further, however, by also claiming Nerva as an ancestor.[80] This claim does not seem to have been at all detrimental to Elagabalus just as Septimius' use of the Antonines had not affected him (Cass. Dio 76.7.4).[81] Macrinus' claims, however, do not seem to have been any use to him when confronted by someone with a more firm link to past emperors.[82] Actual bloodlines created a more solid claim based on tradition than invented ones.

[79] Grant (1996), p. 23.

[80] CIL VIII.10347

[81] Although styling himself in this way caused the Senators dismay, it did not make any difference to the legitimacy of his regime and he continued as emperor for more than a decade without being threatened by usurpers who may have been offended by his claim.

[82] Levick (2007), pp. 145-146.

Aurelian is another example of a man who rose from an *obscuriore familia* (*HA Aurel.* 3.1). He rose through the ranks of the army to the point where, by the time Claudius died, he had risen to be one of the most important men in his entourage.[83] By this time, however, the failure to have come from a Senatorial background was not so loudly decried. The lack of an outcry can be, in part, due to paucity of a contemporary sources but it could also be because there was a growing acceptance that it was the army which groomed future emperors.[84] It could be a combination of both. Over the course of the third century the Senate had not proven itself adept at appointing emperors and after Gallienus' reign had seen the empire disintegrate into three different segments, a strong leader with a strong military understanding was essential.[85] Subsequently, the debacle over the appointment of Tacitus, when the Senate was presented with the opportunity to take a direct hand in affairs, further diminished the Senate's authority in the soldiers' eyes. His brief reign did nothing to renew this authority and this traditional element to imperial legitimacy was no longer held in the same light that it had once been.[86] It seems that these barriers were being broken through and the Senators could do nothing, even when presented with the opportunity. The lack of any narrative sources for the period too can be partly explained by the removal of the Senators from positions close to the emperors. No longer did they record events surrounding the emperor in the same detail as they had done in earlier generations.

[83] Watson (1999), p. 47.

[84] Watson (1999), p. 10.

[85] Watson (1999), pp. 98-99.

[86] N.H. Baynes, 'Three Notes on the Reforms of Diocletian and Constantine". *Journal of Roman Studies*, 1925, Volume 15, pp. 198-199.

Establishing legitimacy in the traditional political sense meant being able to show authority and this was what Aurelian had been able to do and the Senate had not.[87] Showing authority meant that opponents had to be dealt with, supporters rewarded and the emperor had to ensure that no weaknesses were revealed for an opponent to exploit.[88] It was not always easy to do this, especially as it meant keeping the troops in line. Elagabalus, for example, had to offer 2000 sesterces per soldier in order to prevent them from sacking Antioch (Cass. Dio 80.1.1) which shows the hold the troops could have and the measures emperors had to take to rein them in. Constantine provides a similar example (*Pan Lat* 12(9).7.5-7). When he marched on Rome, he had to ensure that his troops maintained their discipline and were prevented from rampaging through the towns on the way.[89] His propaganda had stated that he was seeking to relieve Rome from Maxentius' tyranny (*Pan Lat* 12(9).3.5-7 and 12(9).4.3-4) so it was essential that he ensured that there could be no similar accusation made against him (*Pan Lat* 12(9).7.3).

Then, once Constantine had fought and defeated Maxentius, the portrait of Maxentius as a tyrant was able to be reinforced because he was unable to stand up for his own reputation (*Pan Lat* 12(9).4.4).[90] Those who had supported him in Rome could claim their complicity was merely necessitated by the circumstances

[87] Weber (1994a), p. 31. There was no longer a common belief that the Senate could be relied on to make decisions concerning imperial appointments.

[88] M. Goodman and J. Sherwood, *The Roman World, 44BC-AD180*, (London, 1997), pp. 127-128.

[89] J. Morgan, *Constantine: Ruler of Christian Rome*, (New York, 2003), p. 29.

[90] Barnes (1981), p. 37.

and they could welcome Constantine as their liberator.[91] There was no profit for them to stand up for Maxentius' reputation so Constantine's representation of him is the one handed down through history. These examples show that the army could strongly influence the emperors and that it was often difficult for them to keep the troops in check.[92] It was money which helped them to keep them in line. Providing the political and financial circumstances which allowed this to occur was a traditional role of the emperor since by the time of the Severans and beyond, the emperors had established themselves as the paymasters of the troops.[93]

The emperor also had to reward his supporters in order to ensure the maintenance of this support. Treating opponents harshly was meant to show an emperor's authority and disuade others from trying to undermine his position. The severity which Septimius displayed when he dealt harshly with some of Albinus' supporters (Cass. Dio 76.8.3-4) showed that it was unwise to take on Septimius since he was firmly in charge, while the prominent supporters, such as Plautianus and Anicius Faustus, achieved showed that ambitions could be fulfilled by working within his regime.[94] Dealing with his opponents in such a way was essential for an emperor's security and referring to precedent for the action taken could help justifying his actions. Septimius is said to have praised Augustus for his severity (Cass. Dio 76.8.1). This reminded everyone that even the most highly

[91] Barnes (1981), pp. 45-46.

[92] J.B. Campbell, *The Roman Army: A Sourcebook*, (London, 1994), pp. 230-233.

[93] Campbell (1994), p. 68.

[94] Birley (1971), p. 210, pp. 294-296 and p. 337. Dio does state that some of Albinus' supporters were let off while about the same number were condemned.

regarded emperors had to establish their position by removing the threat of opposition. The money that was exacted from the defeated opponent and their supporters could then be used to further ensure the support of those who had provided the backing for the successful emperor.[95] Septimius did prove successful and he made use of the money he acquired to reward his supporters (Cass. Dio 77.16.1-2). His authority, once established, remained undiminished until his death, with the empire enjoying a time of relative peace.

It was not unusual for an emperor to remove those closest to his predecessor when that emperor had no tie to the regime he was replacing. Maximinus Thrax removed the supporters of Severus Alexander from their positions. He distrusted everyone in general and Senators in particular because of the lack of enthusiasm for his appointment and the failed plots to depose him (Herodian 7.1.4). Members of Alexander's immediate entourage were executed upon his accession (Herodian 7.1.2-3). This contributed to Herodian's accusation of cruelty against him (Herodian 7.1.2 and 6.9.7), but there were no others who were killed with Herodian saying those accompanying Alexander were either sent to Rome or removed from the administration (Herodian 7.1.3).[96] This mixture of severity and leniency was consistent with Septimius' behaviour half a century earlier. The executions removed those closest to the previous regime who might have had the ability to lay claim to the name and get their hands on the money needed to buy the loyalty of the troops or promote someone else well connected and acceptable

[95] J.S. Wacher, *The Roman World: Volume 2*, (London, 2002), p. 566.

[96] εὐθέως οὖν τούς τε φίλους πάντας, οἳ συνῆσαν τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ σύνεδροί [τε] ὑπὸ τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς ἐπιλεχθέντες, ἀπεσκευάσατο, καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην ἀπέπεμψε.

to the troops.[97] Maximinus' decisive action took away any chance they could have of taking advantage of the turmoil that followed Severus Alexander's death for their own ends (Herodian 7.1.3).

Maximinus (Herodian 6.9.7) and Septimius (Herodian 3.8.1-2) both did the same thing and the actions of neither were approved by Herodian. Yet because Septimius fulfilled a range of the roles traditionally expected of the emperor well and Maximinus did not, Septimius' legitimacy was able to be solidified and secured and his regime endured whereas Maximinus was overthrown swiftly and never able to turn opinion away from his severity through his other deeds (Herodian 8.5.9). Likewise, Licinius' and Constantine's removal of opponents does not seem to have affected the legitimacy of either. Again it was other things that destabilised Licinius' position. Licinius removed as many of Maximinus Daia's family and supporters as could be found after defeating him in 313 and he then also went on to remove survivors of Diocletian's and Galerius' families (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 50.1-51.2). This shows that Licinius wanted to clear away any threats to his own power since they had the potential to destabilise his legitimacy.[98] Licinius, himself, after he was defeated and removed by Constantine, was promised that his life would be spared and Constantine was good to his word for some months before it was expedient to have him killed as was also the case with Martianus (Zos. 2.28.2).[99] The clearing of potential threats by all of these

[97] Dihle (1994), pp. 310-311.

[98] Burckhardt (1983), p. 277.

[99] Ἐθάρρει γὰρ ὡς βιώσεται, τῆς αὐτοῦ γαμετῆς ὅρκους ἐπὶ τούτῳ παρὰ Κωνσταντίνου λαβούσης· ὁ δὲ Κωνσταντῖνος Μαρτινιανὸν μὲν παρεδίδου τοῖς δορυφόροις ἐπὶ θανάτῳ, Λικίννιον δὲ εἰς τὴν Θεσσαλονίκην ἐκπέμψας ὡς βιωσόμενον αὐτόθι σὺν ἀσφαλείᾳ, μετ' οὐ πολὺ τοὺς ὅρκους

men helped to consolidate their position. This was a traditional measure with Augustus having undertaken proscriptions with his fellow triumvirs after Caesar's assassination. Sulla also had provided the emperors with a historical example for ruthlessly disposing of enemies who could prove a threat (Plut. *Sull.* 31). The example of Caesar also showed the risk of showing clemency to these men (Plut, *Caes*. 46 and 66).[100] Purging opponents, therefore, had a history in Rome long before the third and fourth century emperors followed the example.[101]

It was wise of Septimius to treat his opponents harshly only once his position was secure, otherwise it might only serve to drive people to support a rival's claim.[102] Traditionally, Roman political office during the Republic had been a contest and the man best served by a network of support was usually able to prevail. Consequently, Septimius did not deal harshly with Niger's supporters with Albinus still a threat to his position, choosing to send them into exile and take their property rather than kill them at this time (Cass. Dio 75.8.3-4). This meant that there was no fear of Septimius driving people to Albinus' side and also that those of Niger's supporters who had been spared either owed a debt to Septimius or were too weak from the confiscations to threaten immediately. Once Albinus had been removed, however, Septimius' *clementia* disappeared and he sought retribution (Herodian 3.8.1-2). He was able to do this because he had proved his

πατήσας (ἦν γὰρ τοῦτο αὐτῷ σύνηθες) ἀγχόνῃ τοῦ ζῆν αὐτὸν ἀφαιρεῖται.

[100] M. Toher, 'The Earliest Depiction of Caesar and the Later Tradition' in M. Wyke (ed.), *Julius Caesar in Western Culture*, (Malden, 2006), pp. 35-36.

[101] R. Bauman, *Human Rights in Ancient Rome*, (London, 2000), p. 114.

[102] G. Bonamente and F. Paschoud, *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Genevense*, (Macerata, 1994), pp. 28-29.

supremacy over his rivals and had secured the backing of all of the remaining legions.[103]

Maximian's blend of harshness and leniency are dealt with in the panegyric of 289 which describes how he dealt with those of the poor forced to turn to brigandage to try to survive with *clementia* (*Pan Lat* 12(9).4.3) while it is juxtaposed to his destruction of external enemies such as the Chaibones and Eruli (*Pan Lat* 12(9). 5.2). *Clementia* was a virtue with which emperors wanted to be associated.[104] Maximian displayed it towards an internal group who were not well resourced and, therefore, not a threat to the security of the empire which meant that he was not risking his standing by doing so.

The need to punish opponents needed to be counterbalanced by rewarding supporters. This would help to secure an emperor's legitimacy since people would support the regime in the expectation of favours to come.[105] The favour Septimius showed men like Plautianus has already been mentioned. Diocletian recognised the need to reward those who worked in his interests and rewarded Aristobulus, who had forsaken Carinus and come over to Diocletian's side, by confirming him as Praetorian Prefect and consul (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). Diocletian obviously welcomed the support but also did not want to risk upsetting the body of troops whose loyalty had been stronger to their prefect than the man who was then their

[103] Bauman (2000), p. 114.

[104] Wallace-Hadrill (1981), p. 300.

[105] Southern (2001), p. 38.

emperor.[106] The foundation of his own regime was not yet solid and he did not command the loyalty of these troops any more than Carinus had been able to. Therefore, ensuring Aristobulus' support and allowing him to maintain his status was a way to try to ensure that these troops were not going to be used against him by Aristobulus or – in the event of Aristobulus' removal – one of the other leaders of those troops who might have had ambitions of high office and been able to use any disaffection Aristobulus' demise created.

The ability to consult with a predecessor was very rare for an emperor. Sometimes a son would be joint emperor with his father, such as Septimius with Caracalla and Geta, but the senior man remained in control until his death (Herodian 3.9.1).[107] It was only then that the younger generation took the lead. In this regard, the position that Diocletian's successors found themselves in was unique. He seems to have abdicated his position voluntarily,[108] although Lactantius does claim that it came about due to pressure from Galerius (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 18.1-7),[109] and his retirement, along with Maximian's, meant that they were both still alive for the incoming emperors to benefit from their experience and authority in person if they so desired. They had retired to Salona and Lucania

[106] T. Mommsen, *A History of Rome under the Emperors*, edited by B. Demandt and A. Demandt, (London, 1999), p. 349.

[107] T.E. Wiedemann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire*, (London, 1999), p. 126.

[108] C.E.V Nixon and B.S Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 188-189.

[109] Lactantius, however, contradicts himself somewhat at 20.4 when he claims Galerius too planned to abdicate after his *vicennalia* suggesting that doing so was part of the tetrarchic system which seems to give credence to the voluntary nature of Diocletian's departure. See Nixon and Rodgers (1994), p. 188.

(Eutropius 9.28),[110] which, while in theory quiet backwaters away from political life in different parts of the empire, enabled them to be close enough to be able to communicate effectively.[111] When problems were encountered and the benefits of Diocletian's wisdom was deemed necessary, he could be called upon. Consequently, Diocletian was asked to reconcile the members of the tetrarchy and encourage them to pursue united ambitions at the council of Carnuntum in 308.[112] Unity in any imperial college was essential for maintaining the legitimacy of a collegial regime.[113]

Diocletian managed to consolidate his reign by sharing imperial power with Maximian and their unity remained undiminished throughout. Having a colleague share his power was not an original idea, having had its roots in the Republican consulship.[114] The idea of the imperial position as a collegial one was not original to the third century either. Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus were invested with equal imperial powers in the middle of the second century (*HA Marc.* 7.6) and in 166 Marcus' two sons were designated as Caesars (*HA Comm.* 1.10). Marcus' sons, however, were not at this time of an age where they would have been able to lead troops, so his ambition was primarily dynastic.[115] Most of the other emperors who promoted others to imperial positions prior to Diocletian also had this as their

[110] Vagi (2000), p. 420.

[111] Southern (2001), p. 152.

[112] S. Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire: AD 284-641*, (Malden, 2007), p. 60.

[113] Rees (2004), p. 72.

[114] T. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c1000-264BC)*, (London, 1995), p. 226.

[115] A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*, (New York, 2000), p. 239. Also Vagi (2000), p. 251.

motive since they had also promoted from within their families, with even those adopting heirs usually taking their nearest relative. When their junior emperors were capable, they were often used to confront problems within different areas of the empire with no fixed delineation of spheres of responsibility.[116] In this regard, Diocletian was no different. By promoting men unrelated to him, however, dynastic succession was not his motivation on the surface.[117] The other time which there had been an attempt to create a shared imperial presence was when the Senate elected Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus to be emperors. Unfortunately, in-fighting and jealousy undermined their regime as each struggled to assert himself over the other (Herodian 8.8.4-5).[118]

Gallienus and Valerian were the most prominent predecessors to try the collegiate approach before Diocletian since both were adults and were able to look after different spheres of the empire (Zos. 1.30.1-2).[119] Gallienus remained in the west while Valerian went east to try and sort out the persistent Persian menace (Zos. 1.30.1-2). This should have aided the legitimacy of Valerian's regime since there were two men working in concord to deal with the threats to the empire. The joint

[116] Southern (2001), p. 136.

[117] C.M. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, (New York, 2004), pp. 40-41. Although not related by blood, marriages were arranged so that there was a familial relationship between the *Augusti* and their *Caesares*.

[118] συνέβαινε δὲ κἀκείνους μὴ πάνυ τι ἀλλήλοις ὁμονοεῖν, ἀλλ' οἷα περ μοναρχίας ἐπιθυμία καὶ τὸ ἀκοινώνητον ἐν ταῖς ἐξουσίαις <εἴωθε ποιεῖν,> ἕκαστος πρὸς αὐτὸν τὴν δύναμιν ἀνθεῖλκεν.

[119] Odahl (2004), p. 19. Zosimus stated:

> Συνιδὼν δὲ ὁ Οὐαλεριανὸς τὸν πανταχόθεν ἐπικείμενον τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ κίνδυνον, αἱρεῖται Γαλλιηνὸν τὸν παῖδα τῆς ἀρχῆς κοινωνόν· ἐνοχλουμένων δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀπανταχόθεν, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἑῴαν ἤλαυνεν Πέρσαις ἀντιστησόμενος, τῷ δὲ παιδὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ στρατόπεδα παρεδίδου, τοῖς πανταχόθεν ἐπιοῦσι βαρβάροις μετὰ τῶν ἐκεῖσε δυνάμεων ἀντιστῆναι παρεγγυήσας.

rule of Valerian and Gallienus, in spite of the problems in dealing with the array of foreign invasions, did last longer than any other since the demise of the Severan dynasty. The dual emperors, therefore, were proving quite successful until all the good work was undone by Valerian's capture.

Carinus and Numerianus had been joint emperors with Carus whilst he was alive and remained emperors together after he died (Eutr. 9.18-20). Again, as earlier when Valerian and Gallienus reigned, there was no formal division of the empire's territories between them,[120] although they were operating in different areas of the empire. Their joint rule was never given the opportunity to develop, however, due to Numerianus' untimely, mysterious death as he was returning from Persia (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 38).

Emperors were expected to show due reverence to the gods and this was necessary for an emperor to be legitimised in the traditional sense. However, the appropriation of the gods in the way that the tetrarchs did constitutes a component of charismatic legitimacy and will be explored further in that chapter.[121] The *pietas* which an emperor was expected to show suggests that they honoured the gods and performed the rituals associated with them. This does not mean that all of the gods were honoured equally by each emperor since they had their favourites with whom they closely identified themselves.[122] There was the

[120] Southern (2001), p. 133.

[121] Weber (1994a), p. 32. This is one of the ways an emperor could promote his heroism, which was an aspect of an emperor's charisma.

[122] Vagi (2000), p. 56.

perception, however, that the ills which were grieving the empire were the result of the lack of attention being paid to the gods. The form of respect shown to the gods differed from emperor to emperor. Decius, for example, had become concerned at the lack of respect that was being shown and so ordered that sacrifices be made in accordance with traditional Roman practices.[123] He also began restoring Roman temples and claimed that he was *restitutor sacrorum* according to an inscription from Cosa.[124] Valerian (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 5.1) and the tetrarchs (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 10.4-5) were the others who are damned by Christian writers as persecutors because they too expected sacrifices to be made in accordance with traditional Roman practice.[125] By 311, however, the Christians were granted toleration by the state (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 34.1-5).[126] This was celebrated by the emperors themselves as examples of their *clementia* and *indulgentia*, traditional virtues which an emperor was expected to show (Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 34.4).[127]

---

[123] See X. Loriot and D. Nony, *La Crise de 'Empire Romain 235-285* (Paris, 1997), pp. 54-55 no. 23 about the order to sacrifice to the gods and the certificates which were given out as proof that the sacrifices had been made.. The text of the decree does not survive (H. Temporini and W. Haase, *Aufsteig und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*. Vol. 16, Part 3, (Berlin, 1986), p. 1832). The surviving *libelli* do make it clear, however, that all subjects of the empire were expected to sacrifice. Also see J.R. Knipfing, 'The *Libelli of the Decian Persecution', The Harvard Theological Review*, 16(1923), pp. 345-390.

[124] *AE* 235

[125] Rees (2004), p. 60.

[126] F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World: 31 BC – AD 337*. (London, 1977), pp. 578-579. See Lactant. *Mort. Pers.* 34.1-35.1.

[127] Temporini and Haase (1986), p. 3719. Hadrian had extolled these virtues on his coinage almost two centuries earlier.

Other emperors showed that they took their responsibilities seriously without feeling the need to issue demands that the gods be honoured by everyone. For them, it was enough that they fulfilled this duty themselves. Septimius, for example, went to the temple of Jupiter and offered a sacrifice (Herodian 2.14.2). He then did this at other temples in accordance with imperial custom (Herodian 2.14.2).[128] That these were among his very first acts upon entering Rome shows how seriously he took religious practice. This reflected well on him and can be compared to Elagabalus who can be seen to take his own religion very seriously but not that of the Romans (Herodian 5.5.7-5.6.10). He built a large temple when he arrived in Rome (Herodian 5.5.8) but took a Vestal Virgin to be his wife (Herodian 5.6.2), effectively mocking the strict expectations placed on these women to remain chaste and in Vesta's service for the duration of their lives (Plut. *Num.* 10.1-4).[129]

Most emperors tried to fulfil the duties that tradition decreed the role demanded. Elagabalus is noteworthy for his difference and his removal came about when his behaviour became threatening towards Severus Alexander (Cass. Dio 80.19.1-20.2), who had won over the Praetorians with his conduct. The sources are unfavourable towards Elagabalus (see Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 23 and Zos. 1.11.1 for example),[130] but even allowing for their bias against him, his religious practices,

[128] ἀνελθὼν ἐς τὸ τοῦ Διὸς τέμενος καὶ θύσας, ἔν τε τοῖς λοιποῖς ἱεροῖς νόμῳ βασιλικῷ καλλιερήσας.

[129] Vagi (2000), p. 300.

[130] Aurelius Victor's (*Caes.* 23) description of Elagabalus focuses on his behaviour. *Hoc impurius ne improbae quidem aut petulantes mulieres fuere: quippe orbe toto obscoenissimos perquirebat visendis tractandisve artibus †libidinum ferendarum*. Zosimus' (1.11.1) description also focuses on

overt homosexuality and the influence which he allowed his lovers to gain were all things which went against accepted traditional imperial practice.[131]

Different gods were favoured at different times and, by the end of the third century, emperors tended to favour one particular god over the others with Aurelian, for example, favouring Sol (*HA, Aurel.* 39.6).[132] There was no one particular favourite, however, with the complete dominance of Christianity still some way in the future. The occasional persecution of the Christians was not because of any obviously perceived threat towards the established Roman gods, but rather because the emperors were seeking to appease these established gods by having everyone in the empire show them the respect that they thought was their due.[133] Firm Christians could not accept this and suffered as a result. Some emperors, Decius for example, believed that respecting the traditional gods would make them relieve the empire from the suffering that it was going through.[134] The good of the empire, consequently, was at the heart of attempts for religious renewal and the conviction that some emperors showed. Ultimately, most

his behaviour.

> Τοῦ δὲ Ἀντωνίνου κρατήσαντος καὶ τοῖς τὰ Μακρίνου φρονήσασιν ὡς δυσμενέσιν ἐπεξελθόντος, τά τε ἄλλα αἰσχρῶς καὶ ἐπονειδίστως βεβιωκότος, μάγοις τε καὶ ἀγύρταις ἐσχολακότος καὶ περὶ τὰ θεῖα ἠσεβηκότος, οὐκ ἐνεγκόντες οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι τὴν τῆς ἀσελγείας ὑπερβολήν, κατασφάξαντες καὶ τὸ σῶμα διασπάσαντες.

[131] W. Ball, *Rome in the East: the Transformation of an Empire*, (London, 2000), pp. 413-414.

[132] L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*, (Leiden, 1999), p. 174.

[133] G. Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 48.

[134] Mackay (2004), p. 270. The text of the decree does not survive (H. Temporini and W. Haase, *Aufsteig und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*. Vol. 16, Part 3, (Berlin, 1986), p. 1832). The surviving *libelli* do make it clear, however, that all subjects of the empire were expected to sacrifice. Also see J.R. Knipfing, 'The *Libelli of the Decian Persecution', The Harvard Theological Review*, 16(1923), pp. 345-390.

emperors, successful or otherwise, were attempting to make the empire safer and better. Unfortunately, in this epoch, many were unsuccessful.

Conclusions

Therefore, in the context of the Roman empire, there were traditional attributes which an emperor expected to have. Having any of these attributes enhanced his legitimacy, while having them all would mean that he was secure in his position. Septimius and Diocletian both enhanced their standing by enjoying victory over external foes and, consequently, keeping the empire safe. The emperor was expected to be a man who came from the Senatorial class which corresponds with Weber's assertion that tradition was an acceptance of the ways which had existed in the society through the generations.[135] The vast majority of emperors did continue to come from this class of men and the earliest of those who did not, Macrinus (Cass. Dio. 79.41.2) and Maximinus Thrax (Zos. 1.13.3),[136] struggled to maintain their position. The emperor's military role was also something that was of long standing. The *imperium* which they held was the same power which consuls used when they led armies during the Republic and, consequently, this leadership also corresponds with Weber's traditional category.[137] The majority of the emperors during the third century were with their armies and their success or failure in this role came to define the ongoing legitimacy of their regime. It was

[135] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[136] Τῆς δὲ βασιλείας ἤδη βεβαίως παρὰ Μαξιμίνου κατεχομένης, ἐν μεταμελείᾳ πάντες ἦσαν ὡς τυραννίδα πικρὰν μετρίας ἀλλαξάμενοι βασιλείας· γένους γὰρ ὢν ἀφανοῦς,

[137] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

when they were successful that they were obeyed and their right to command accepted.[138]

Traditionally the expectation was that this success would involve taking the territory of the enemy rather than merely repelling them from the empire. In this regard, there was little success throughout this period since the extent of the empire remained much as it had throughout the second century. The emperor was expected to make laws and make judgments on the basis of these laws, for which Septimius receives praise. After two centuries of imperial rule, it was expected that the emperor would be responsible for all forms of leadership in the state. As well as the political sphere, this also extended to leadership in the religious sphere where respect for the gods and their role in Roman society was important. The enrichment of the soldiers, therefore was not all that the emperor needed to do to ensure they maintained the legitimacy of their regime.

The idea of collegial government was also a traditional one dating back into the Republic. Marcus Aurelius (*HA, Marc.* 7.6 and *Comm.* 1.10) also provided an example and it was not unusual for emperors to give their sons a share in the governance of the empire and give them commands once they were old enough. Septimius (Herodian 3.9.1), Valerian (Zos 1.30.1) and Carus (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 38) had all provided examples of this, but Diocletian was the most exceptional example in that the men he promoted were not blood relations (Aur. Vict. *Caes.*

[138] M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968), pp. 215-216.

39). As unusual as this was there was some resonance with the past since consuls, the traditional leaders of the state during the Republic when they were the most important men in the Roman state, were unrelated but needed to have a working relationship that benefited the state.

Chapter 4: Charismatic Legitimacy

The charismatic nature of imperial legitimacy is a more nebulous concept than either the proclaimed legality or traditional types of legitimacy because it is based on the willingness of an individual to believe in the leader's charisma rather than having the concrete nature of a proclamation or the weight of tradition behind it.[1] It is by its nature a way for emperors to draw attention to their person through their relationship to the divine or their exemplary personal characteristics.[2] Emperors whose traditional or proclaimed legitimacy had not been established or had been eroded tried to bolster their standing by other means which focused on their person in order that their charismatic authority was recognised by those subject to his rule.[3] These methods were designed to enhance their standing and to try and draw support to themselves and included making the ceremonies which surrounded them or the titles which they claimed for their victories more elaborate or exulted. Not all of their attempts were successful, however, and these military failures which revealed a breakdown in the emperor's relationship with the divine or a diminution of the personal characteristics which had attracted support, led to charismatic authority being lost.[4]

[1] M. Weber. *Sociological Writings*. (New York, 1994a), p. 32.

[2] Weber (1994a), p. 33.

[3] Weber (1994a), p. 33.

[4] Weber (1994a), pp. 33-34.

Ultimately, when charismatic authority is consolidated, it will evolve into a traditional or legal form of authority.[5] For example, when Septimius received acclamations as *imperator* by his troops,[6] this was acknowledgement of his heroic qualities and the success of this campaign allowed for the routinisation of this charismatic boost to his legitimacy into a traditional virtue of defending the empire from foreign enemies. This, therefore, enhanced this form of legitimacy because of his ongoing success.[7] Receiving acclamations enhanced the charismatic legitimacy of an emperor and their receipt by generals had a long-standing in the Roman world.[8]

Not all of the methods for enhancing an emperor's charismatic legitimacy had such long roots. Some of the methods used were those that had not been attempted by emperors in stable times. Gallienus, for example, attempted to bolster his standing by sprinkling his hair with gold dust and by wearing a radiate crown in public. He also wore a purple cloak with jewels and golden clasps (*HA Gall.* 16.4).[9] He seems to have regarded it as a way to promote his position and stand out from those aspiring to and fighting to become emperor. The exemplary characteristics he was promoting was his status above ordinary men and, consequently, illustrating an assocation with the divine.[10]

---

[5] Weber (1994a), p. 37.

[6] *ILS* 417.

[7] Weber (1994a), p. 38.

[8] L.J.F. Keppie, *Understanding Roman Inscriptions*, (Baltimore, 1991), p. 42.

[9] cum chlamyde purpurea gemmatisque fibulis et aureis Romae visus est.

[10] Weber (1994a), p. 33.

Similarly, the emperors linked themselves to gods.[11] This was more than performing the duties of a priest or showing the veneration due to a god which was the traditional role. For example, some emperors – Diocletian and Maximian are a case in point – claimed relationships to the gods they linked themselves to, in this case through their use of the names Herculius and Jovius (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39).[12] It was not just links to gods, but victories over Rome's enemies which were advertised through the use of victory titles. When Septimius, for example, decided to celebrate the Secular Games it would have given him the opportunity to advertise his ancestry and titulature in front of the Roman people as well as the relationship he had with gods such as Hercules (Herodian 3.8.10).[13] His ancestry allowed him to show that there was an established family on the imperial throne with the promise of more to come in the form of his sons since he had made sure his whole family took an active part in the celebrations.[14] His titulature, *Arabicus*, *Adiabenicus*, *Parthicus Maximus* catalogued Rome's enemies whom he had defeated,[15] which promoted not only his own martial prowess but also in the case of *Parthicus Maximus* linked his regime to the success which Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus had against the same enemy.[16] Septimius followed Augustus' example by publicising the celebration of the games on coins.[17] He also celebrated

[11] R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 50.

[12] Maximianum ... Huic postea cultu numinis Herculio cognomentum accessit, uti Valerio Iovium.

[13] R. Brilliant, 'The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, Volume 29, (1967), p. 104.

[14] A. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London, 1971), p. 227 and p. 230.

[15] C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2000), p. 106.

[16] Y. Le Bohec, *The Roman Imperial Army*, (New York, 1994), p. 202.

[17] BMC V (Septimius and Caracalla) 843, 845 and 846 are examples for Septimius' reign.

his military successes on them and even included Caracalla on them at the time, claiming on one coin to be *Victoria Parthica Maxima* and *IMPP INVICTI PII AUGG*.[18]

We do not know exactly how much influence the emperor exerted over the mints, but there is evidence in Herodian (2.15.5) as well as earlier sources that at times the emperors did take a personal interest in the coins which were struck.[19] The coin legends contributed to an emperors charisma by providing a forum for them to publicise the exemplary characteristics they wanted people to associate them with, such as their religious virtues or military prowess.[20] The depictions which went with the legend would reinforce religious or military symbolism and provide meaning for those who could not derive meaning from the words. Septimius also gained yet another title, *propagator imperii*, for successes in North Africa which had extended the boundaries of the empire.[21]

Philip the Arab was another who celebrated the Secular Games, which coincided with the celebration for the thousandth year of the city of Rome. Games were put on and he also issued coins which commemorated *Roma Aeterna*.[22] Like those

[18] BMC V (Septimius and Caracalla) 265.

[19] M. Peachin, *Roman Imperial Titulature and Chronology AD 235-284* (Amsterdam, 1990), p. 10. See Suet., *Aug.* 94.12 and *Ner.* 25.2 as these are examples of emperors from earlier eras having coins struck to mark events that they wanted noted.

[20] M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968), pp. 215-216.

[21] Birley (1971), p. 133. *Ephem. Epig* v 898 and 902.

[22] RIC IV.3 Philip 44, 85, 140 and 243 have the legend ROMAE AETERNAE. He also celebrated the games on coins with the legend SAECVLVM NOVVM (RIC IV.3 Philip 25, 86 and 244 are examples).

emperors before and after him, Philip wanted to make sure that his benefaction was broadcast and that the people and soldiers were aware who was providing it in order that he received the flattery and adulation associated with the perpetuation of the city.[23] Other imperial virtues were also proclaimed on coins in order to ensure that the people knew the qualities which the particular emperor wanted to be associated with. Probus, for example, used his coins to proclaim his *virtus* and invincibility.[24] These are exemplary qualities which emperors were associated with in order to try to highlight the impressive character of the particular emperor.[25]

For Aurelian, his military success which he had within the fragmented empire was extremely important.[26] When he finally restored the east to the empire, he proclaimed himself on his coins as *Restitutor Orientis*,[27] which later became *Restitutor Orbis* after he restored the Gallic provinces to the empire and again ruled a united, although insecure, Roman world.[28] These titles, however, had also been awarded to Valerian, whose capture by the Persians meant that Aurelian would not want to carry only those titles such an ultimately unsuccessful emperor had.[29] Aurelian's titulature, therefore, became even more extravagant in order to stand out when compared to these other emperors whom he would not have

[23] S.K. Drummond and L.H. Nelson, *The Western Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, (New York, 1994), p. 201.

[24] RIC V.2 Probus 451-456 have *virtus* and *invictus* as their legends.

[25] Weber (1994a), pp. 32-33.

[26] T.E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium*, (Malden, 2010), p. 30.

[27] RIC V.1 Aurelian 140-141, 233-234 and 350-351 all have *Restitutor Orientis* as their legend.

[28] RIC V.1 Aurelian 287-306 are examples of Aurelian claiming to be *Restitutor Orbis*.

[29] A. Watson, *Aurelian and the Third Century*, (London, 1999), p. 174

considered to have achieved as much. In inscriptions, he is described as *victoriosissimus* and *gloriosissimus* and he conquered the Carpi, Germans, Arabians, Persians and Palmyrenes.[30] *Gloriosissimus* and *restitutor patriae* were titles unclaimed before during this troubled period since the demise of the Severans, whereas Valerian had also laid claim on *Restitutor Orientis* and *Restitutor Orbis* on his coins. Gallienus claimed he too was *Restitutor Orbis* on his coins and was *victoriosissimus* in inscriptions.[31] They were, however, none of these and Aurelian felt the need to show that he was better.

Coins and inscriptions were two of the ways that the emperors could publicise the success they enjoyed or the causes with which they wanted to be linked.[32] The victory titles which they took, such as *Parthicus*, *Sarmaticus*, *Germanicus* and *Britannicus*, showed the foreign enemies who had been defeated and promoted the emperor's military might.[33] These appeared on their coins and on inscriptions and were appended to their names in order that everyone was reminded of their success whenever the emperor was formally announced or issued an edict and,

---

[30] For *gloriosissimus* see *CIL* VIII.22361 and VIII.22449, *victoriosissimus CIL* VIII.10205 and VIII.20537. Titles for success over the Carpi, Germans, Goths and Parthians are all claimed on *CIL* VI.1112. *CIL* II.4506 list the Arabians, Goths and Carpi. *CIL* V.4319 has Palmyra, the Germans and the Goths.

[31] Peachin (1990), pp. 511-515. See *CIL* III.7586 for *restitutor patriae*. Valerian's claim as *restitutor orientis* RIC V.1 Valerian 286. For *restitutor orbis* see for example RIC V.1 Valerian 118. Gallienus also made the claim RIC V.1 Gallienus 165. See *CIL* VI 1108 and XI 3090a for Gallienus' claim to be *victoriosissimus*.

[32] W. Sayles, *Ancient Coin Collecting III: The Roman World – Politics and Propaganda*, (Iola, 2007), p. 45.

[33] S. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate*, (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 197-198.

therefore, enhanced their charismatic legitimacy by reminding the audience that these were the heroic qualities through their martial success and successes with which he wanted to be associated.[34] Diocletian's edict on maximum prices provides an example of emperors advertising their heroic qualities by stating the victories enjoyed over tribes such as the Germans, Sarmatians and Britains.[35] The *cognomina devictarum gentium* also continued to multiply and Aurelian held nine such titles. During the tetrarchy the emperors shared their titulature regardless of which specific emperor had been successful.[36] The multiplication of the number of titles held showed the need that emperors felt to extol their military virtues and showed they were successful. It was an attempt to ensure those subject to him maintained their faith in his ability and his heroism, as the martial leader of the empire who was charged with its defence and expansion.[37] The sharing of titles expressed the unity of the imperial college and was meant to ensure that no one emperor was perceived to be more heroic than another and avoid people having more willingness to believe in one emperor at the expense of another.[38]

Septimius (Zos. 1.8.2), Aurelian (Zos. 1.48.2) and the tetrarchy (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39) all enjoyed military successes which enhanced their reputation with the troops. This gave them the right to claim the titles which they took and the

[34] See RIC VI 5a and 19a for an example of the tetrarchs issuing a coing to celebrate victory over the Sarmatians.

[35] W.M. Leake (ed), *An Edict of Diocletian, fixing a Maximum of Prices throughout the Roman Empire*, (London, 1826), p. 8

[36] M. McCormick *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), p.22.

[37] Weber (1994a), pp. 32-33

[38] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

number of epithets which they incorporated should be seen to have enhanced their heroic qualities. This was certainly the effect which they were seeking. The successes they enjoyed means that there would not have been any dilution of their charismatic authority and there is nothing in the extant sources to suggest that their use of these titles did have an adverse effect on their standing. Septimius' first campaign against the Parthians served its purpose since it provided him with honours and titles which allowed him to add the names *Parthicus Arabicus*, *Parthicus Adiabenus* and *Parthicus Maximus* to his own,[39] while after his second campaign he conferred the title *Parthicus Maximus* upon himself.[40] Septimius also publicised his achievements against the Parthians on a series of paintings which provided a visual reminder of the success he had had (Herodian 3.9.12).[41] Septimius' titles, therefore, allowed him to exploit his successes and enhance his military reputation and so contributed to his legitimation. For a new emperor who had emerged through civil war, the foreign success was a chance to show that the empire was in strong hands and, in Septimius' case, a chance to unite Niger's legions, which he had been fighting against, with his own and fight a common enemy.[42] This was important when there had been fragmentation caused by different areas being subjected to different aspirants in the civil war since the presence of a strong emperor would be a disincentive for other pretenders to

[39] RIC 4.1 55cf lists Septimius as PART ARAB PART ADIAB while RIC 4.1 167a refers to PART MAX. Also see P. Kneissl, *Die Siegestitulator der Römischen Kaiser*, (Göttingen, 1969), p. 211.

[40] RIC IV.1 Septimius Severus 122-173 are examples of coins upon which this title appears.

[41] οὕτω μὲν δὴ Σεβῆρος, τύχῃ μᾶλλον ἢ γνώμῃ, τῇ κατὰ Παρθυαίων νίκῃ κεκόσμητο· τούτων δὲ αὐτῷ δεξιῶς καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν εὐχὴν προχωρησάντων ἐπέστειλε τῇ τε συγκλήτῳ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ, τάς τε πράξεις μεγαληγορῶν, τὰς μάχας τε καὶ τὰς νίκας δημοσίαις ἀνέθηκε γραφαῖς.

[42] C.M. Wells, *The Roman Empire*, (Cambridge, MA, 1995) p. 283.

emerge. Septimius' success would have showed the army, Senate and people that they had an emperor who was interested in the glory of the empire and displaying and publicising this success was the most certain method in Rome of drawing support and enhancing his authority.[43] The victory titles provided an on-going reminder of the success he had enjoyed. No emperor was going to let a victory go uncelebrated because of the public relations mileage that was able to be made from their successes.

Macrinus awarded the title of *Parthicus Maximus* to himself when he reported to the Senate that the Parthian campaign had been finalised (Cass. Dio 79.27.3). Severus Alexander took the title *Persicus Maximus* when he triumphed in Rome for the Persian campaigns which resulted in hostilities largely ceasing between the two powers for the remainder of the 230s.[44] He also celebrated a triumph (*HA Alex. Sev.* 56.1)[45] even though the war was wound up so he could return to address problems on his northern frontier rather than it being fought to a successful conclusion (Herodian 6.7.1-5). In this case, failure to defeat the Persians alone does not seem to have caused any problems with Severus Alexander's standing because a number of the troops were from these northern areas and wanted to get back there to deal with threats to their homes and families.[46] According to Herodian, they were already angry at him for neglecting affairs there (Herodian

[43] J.B. Campbell, *War and Society in Imperial Rome 31 BC – AD* 284. (London, 2002), p. 144.

[44] D.L. Vagi, *Coinage and History of the Roman Empire*, (Chicago, 2000), p. 307.

[45] Post hoc Romam venit triumphoque pulcherrimo acto.

[46] P. Edwell and P.M. Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia: the Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman Control*, (Abingdon, 2008), p. 166.

6.7.3),[47] so leaving the east to tackle the Germanic tribes should have appeased them. However, when he negotiated with the Germans rather than attack them, he was no longer seen by the troops as a worthy emperor and the soldiers removed him (Herodian 6.7.9-10). The heroic, charismatic qualities which he was trying to celebrate by claiming the title of *Parthicus Maximus* were not apparent in this failure to attack the Germanic tribes and he needed to do so for the sake of his charismatic standing. Charismatic authority could be delegitimated when the heroic qualities which were designed to draw personal support were no longer apparent.[48]

Victory titles for claimed success against the Persians continued throughout the middle of the third century. Philip the Arab took the title *Parthicus Maximus* for settling affairs in the east even though this settlement was negotiated and cost the Romans money and territory.[49] Gallienus took the title *Parthicus Maximus* on the basis of the success enjoyed by Odaenathus, whom he rewarded with the title *dux totius orientis* (Zonar 24).[50] That Gallienus awarded these titles to him suggests they were working in concord, although over time Odaenathus' ambitions may have been rising.[51] They also suggest that charges against Gallienus for ignoring the east were based on anti-Gallienan sentiment and not the situation that actually

[47] ἠγανάκτουν οὖν, καὶ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον εἶχον ἐν αἰτίᾳ ὡς τὰ ὑπὸ ταῖς ἀνατολαῖς δι' ἀμέλειαν ἢ δειλίαν προδεδωκότα, πρός τε τὰ ἀρκτῷα μέλλοντα καὶ ὀκνοῦντα.

[48] Weber (1994a), pp. 33-34.

[49] *CIL* III.4634 (Partico Maximo) and III.10619 (Parthico Maximo).

[50] L. de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 34-35.

[51] E. Cizak, *L'Empereur Aurélien et son Temps* (Paris, 1994), p. 78 believes that Odaenathus' ambition had risen so far that he may have turned against Gallienus by the time he died.

existed at the time. Carus was another who received the title *Parthicus* for his success over the Persians.[52] The prevalence of titles taken for success against Parthia/Persia shows the ongoing struggle for supremacy in the east between the two empires which had a long history dating back to the time of the Roman Republic.

These were all designed by the individual emperors to draw support by showing that they had the heroic qualities required by a Roman leader.[53] Philip the Arab, like Severus Alexander, did not have enough substance behind his claimed title and, consequently, did not have sufficient charismatic authority to claim sufficient loyalty to his person. Gallienus too, although able to claim credit for Odaenathus' success, was not able to use it to draw support. This was a failure of the tactic and shows that a negotiated or appropriated peace was not a substitute for an enforced one in regard to the enhancement of an emperor's legitimacy.

Carus died soon after his victory over the Persians (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 38), but his son, Numerianus, was with this army and the legitimacy his father derived from his success meant that Numerianus was acclaimed unchallenged as successor (Zonar. 30). This dynastic connection and proximity to the troops was distinct from Gallienus' attempt to claim credit for a success which occurred in an area he was perceived as having little authority. Charismatic authority could be claimed

[52] RIC V.2 Carus 30 and 108-113. For the claim of Carus to *Persicus* see RIC V.2 Carus 48 & 50. These were all issued posthumously.

[53] Keppie (1991), p. 44-45.

through a familial relationship.[54] This authority can only be maintained, however, through the selection of the correct heir.[55]

Although eastern campaigns remained the pinnacle of success that an emperor could enjoy, there was also a great need to deal with tribes along the Rhine and Danube frontiers. This then afforded further opportunities for glory and self-promotion. Maximinus Thrax was raised as Severus Alexander's replacement because Alexander was perceived as being weak towards the Germanic tribes (Herodian 6.7.10) so it was important that he be seen as active and successful in this region. Consequently, this was the action he undertook and he was successful after a bloody exchange (Herodian 7.1.5 and 7.2.7). He was able to take the titles *Germanicus Maximus*, *Sarmaticus* and *Dacius* which, even allowing for some self aggrandisement, shows that he did achieve what was expected of him.[56] Philip the Arab also took the titles *Germanicus* and *Carpicus Maximus*,[57] although pay-offs were made to these peoples to make sure they remained quiet.[58] Other emperors also laid claim to the same titles. Claudius became *Germanicus Maximus* for his success over the Alamanni,[59] while Aurelian claimed the title *Carpicus Maximus* when his commander, Marcellinus, defeated the Carpi.[60] Tacitus earned the title

[54] Weber (1994a), p. 39.

[55] Weber (1994a), p. 39.

[56] *CIL*XIII.8861 and XVII.312 amongst others for all three titles.

[57] See *IGR* IV 635 for the title of Germanicus and *P. Lond.* 3 p. 221, papyrus no. 951 for both titles.

[58] H. Temporini and W. Haase, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung*. (Berlin, 1986), p. 3006. These subsidies were subsequently stopped in about 249 which led to further problems from these tribes.

[59] *CIL* XII.2228 and III.3521 provide examples.

[60] *CIL* VI.1112. IMP CAES L DOMITIO AVRELIANO … GOTHICO … GERMANICO … CARPICO.

Gothicus Maximus, although the victory for which it was earned was barely recorded by the literary sources.[61] This shows the difficulty the Romans had subduing tribes from these areas but those emperors who did fight the tribes successfully enhanced their personal standing and, consequently, their charismatic legitimacy.

Germanic tribes had a long history of causing panic in the minds of the Romans with the *Teutones* and *Cimbri* having massacred Roman legions in the second century BC (Florus 1.38) so commanders enjoying real success enhanced their heroic status. During the third century it was not often the case that the emperor was able to go and take the initiative against these enemies since they so frequently had to deal with incursions into Roman territory. That they needed the attention of the emperors over many generations shows the threat they posed and the inadequacies of the ability of the Roman defences to contain them.[62] Failure to deal with these threats would then endanger the emperor's legitimacy because it would undermine the support he received from the army as was the case with Severus Alexander and Philip the Arab.[63] This highlights the need for the emperor to maintain his control over the army which was something he could only do when his legitimacy was secure.

Some emperors faced problems in the same area repeatedly. Diocletian and Maximian took the title *Sarmaticus Maximus* four times and *Germanicus*

[61] *CIL* XII.5563. IMP CAES MARCVS CLAVDIVS TACITVS … GOTHYCVS MAXIMUS.

[62] P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*, (New York, 1998), pp. 52-55.

[63] F. Meijer, *Emperors Don't Die in Bed*, (London, 2004), p. 81 and p. 90.

Maximus six times over about fifteen years which suggests that these areas presented on-going problems for them that was difficult to settle.[64] There is no evidence in the sources to suggest that the repeated need to fight the same enemy or in the same region had any effect on the legitimacy of the tetrarchy. This was in part because the extra emperors meant that there was always an emperor available to deal with the threat which in turn meant that the emperor never needed to move far from the affected area. It also helped that this emperor kept being successful. Other emperors, such as Gallienus (see Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 33)[65] or even Severus Alexander (Herodian 6.5.7 and 6.7.3-6),[66] needed to move around more to deal with threats and their inability to defeat all of these opponents in combat and the need to pay off opponents destabilised their standing. Failure, therefore, eroded the willingness of those subject to a regime to maintain their belief in it.[67] With the tetrarchy, however, failure by one emperor could be offset against the success of another so the college of emperors as a whole did not suffer an erosion of belief in its legitimacy.[68] This highlights the advantage of having an imperial college so as to reduce the need to for an individual emperor to be moving continuously over

[64] T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass.,1982), p. 255, table 5. The Edict of Diocletian on Prices in 301 mentions *Sarmaticus Maximus* and *Germanicus Maximus*. These titles were also taken by the Caesars. See Leake (ed.) (1826), p. 8. Also see P.R. Coleman-Norton, A.C. Johnson, F.C. Bourne and C. Pharr, *Ancient Roman Statues: A Translation with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary and Index*, (Clark, NJ, 2003), p. 235.

[65] Gallienus had to deal with Germans in Gaul and the hurry off to Illyricum to deal with usurpation attempts. He then had to try to prevent incursions through Thrace and the Alamanni into Italy. This is just to list briefly some of the movements Gallienus had to make to keep the empire together.

[66] These passages in Herodian show the problems Alexander had in the east and then in the west.

[67] Weber (1994a), p. 33.

[68] Weber (1994a), pp. 33-34.

vast distances to ensure he was seen by the soldiers to be in charge of threats as they arose.

In the third century there were a number of men who claimed to be *restitutor* or *conservator*. For example, Philip the Arab, Maximinus, Valerian, Probus and Aurelian all claimed to be the *restitutor* of something. Probus, Tacitus, Maximinus and Valerian, amongst others made a claim to be a *conservator* whether it was as the preserver of the world, the army or just dignity and freedom. Consequently, if the boast was worthy of broadcast, there was an element of necessity behind it which made it worthwhile for the emperors to take credit for it.[69] Gallienus used titles such as *invictus* to try to show that he was a strong leader and the saviour of the state.[70] He also used the title *magnus*.[71]

Gallienus tried to draw a link between himself and Trajan by using the same epithet, *optimus princeps*.[72] Titles were taken, therefore, that could link an emperor not only to their own success but to the success of those who had preceded them. There is no evidence to say whether or not this attempted association benefited Gallienus but being linked to an emperor with the regard in which Trajan was held meant that there were expectations of success that were necessary before the link could enhance Gallienus' charismatic standing. In this regard, Gallienus tried to enhance his standing through Odaenathus' success

[69] See Peachin (1990), pp. 511-515 for these examples of the many emperors who claimed these types of titles.

[70] *IRT* 458 provides an example of its use in an inscription.

[71] *CIL* XIV.4058. MAGNO ET INVICTO IMP GALLIENO.

[72] de Blois (1976), p. 131.

against the Persians, through his use of the totle *Parthicus Maximus*,[73] a part of the world in which Trajan had also been victorious.[74] Therefore, it can be assumed that the link to Trajan did not boost Gallienus' standing and the association with a past hero can only have been detrimental.

Titles, once gained by an emperor, were not always kept.[75] Diocletian may have taken the title *Britannicus Maximus* on the strength of Carausius' success against the pirates,[76] although it could have been due to success enjoyed by Carinus which Diocletian either appropriated as his own or completed if the campaigning was on-going.[77] That he dropped the title would suggest that it was after Carausius' victory that it was taken and then, after Carausius rebelled and set himself up as an emperor within Britain, it was no longer politic of Diocletian to keep a title achieved through the efforts of a man he would now have to oppose.[78] Keeping the title would only have served to enhance Carausius' legitimacy and support his claim to have been an equal within the imperial college with Diocletian and Maximian as he had claimed on his coinage.[79] Removing the title from his own

[73] *IRT* 956.

[74] K. Farrokh, *Shadows in the Desert: Ancient Persia at War*, (Oxford, 2007), p. 61.

[75] C.E.V Nixon and B.S Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 107.

[76] Nixon and Rodgers (1994), p. 107. *ILS* 615.

[77] A. Birley, *The Roman Government of Britain*, (Oxford, 2005), p. 368.

[78] A. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, *The Cambridge Ancient History: The Crisis of Empire, AD 193-337*, (Cambridge, 2005), p. 71 believe that it might have been taken then dropped because it was Carausius' success.

[79] P. Salway, *Roman Britain* (Oxford, 1981), p. 299. See RIC V.2 Carausius, Diocletian and Maximian 1 for the coin on which Carausius claims to be the joint emperor with the Dyarchs, On the obverse he put the legend CARAVSIVS ET FRATRES SVI and on the reverse PAX AUGGG.

titulature, therefore, took away any acknowledgement that he had been involved with the usurper. It also warned Carausius that he was not recognised nor accepted as an imperial colleague. Since recognition from the ruled is essential for charismatic authority to exist, Carausius, like any usurper was unable to attain belief in his status with the wider empire and certainly meant that he could expect to be challenged in his position by those emperors who did enjoy wide ranging acceptance of their position.[80]

The collegial idea that Diocletian promoted with the tetrarchy meant that success was shared. All of the tetrarchs shared all of the victory titles with one another, regardless of which tetrarch was responsible for the success.[81] The Caesars in the tetrarchy, however, did not receive all of the titles which the *Augusti* had since they were not acknowledged as *Imperatores*.[82] Sharing the military titles in this way removed competition for success because it meant that any success enjoyed by one of the tetrarchs contributed to the legitimation of the regime as a whole.[83] It also meant that each emperor enjoyed the same official standing and, consequently, the legitimacy that one emperor enjoyed was enjoyed collegially. The legitimacy of Maximian was, therefore, linked with Diocletian. This was shown after their retirement when Maximian tried to make a comeback (Zos. 2.10.4-7/Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 40). Without Diocletion, Maximian was unable to assert his own status against the new set of emperors. Diocletian, however, was not

[80] Weber (1994a), pp. 32-33.

[81] McCormick (1986), p. 112.

[82] Barnes (1982), pp. 25-26. See the text of the price edict, Leake (ed.), p. 8.

[83] Rees (2004), p. 73.

responsible for every title which the original tetrarhy enjoyed amongst themselves so they all contributed to their legitimacy. The sharing of victory titles, however, does mean that the successes of an individual emperor, such as Constantius, are not well documented.[84] Although, for example, we do know that he was successful because of the victory titles that were taken by the tetrarchs for his successes over the Germans and Sarmatians, we are lacking much of the detail about the campaigns and at whose instigation they were undertaken. The promotion of the success, however, was sufficient to enhance the legitimacy of the regime because it helped promote the heroic qualities of the emperor.[85]

As well as victories being a way of boosting a regime by promoting its ongoing success, they also brought financial reward.[86] The *aurum coronarium* was expected to be given to an emperor to celebrate the victories which he won and the series of coins which Gallienus issued to celebrate victores suggests that he exploited this particular source of revenue.[87] Even though he claimed these victories and the money associated with their celebration, he did not deliver what was expected of an emperor since the empire remained fragmented. This failure to unite the empire meant that when he did take time away from the battlefield, he left himself open to accusations of laziness and negligence which the ancient sources are quick to tarnish him with (Eutr. 9.8).[88] Archaeological and epigraphic

[84] Rees (2004), p. 73.

[85] Weber (1994a), p.32.

[86] Bowman, Garnsey and Cameron (2005), p. 383.

[87] J. Bray, *Gallienus: A Study in Reformist and Sexual Politics* (Kent Town, 1997) p. 202.

[88] Gallienus … mox in omnem lasciviam dissolutus, tendendae rei publicae habenas probosa ignavia et desperatione laxavit.

evidence, together with descriptions of what Gallienus was doing, rather than assessments of his character, do show the vast range that he covered trying to maintain the stability of the empire that remained.[89] Such efforts were an attempt by Gallienus to maintain the willingness of the people to believe in his charisma but unfortunately being unsuccessful meant that his legitimacy was eroded and this ultimately led to his assassination.[90]

Aurelian's eternal victory is celebrated in inscriptions as is his association with Hercules.[91] He is also *Imperator deus et dominus*.[92] The idea of the emperor as *princeps senatus* was long dead, but the notion of the emperor as an actual *deus* was new. The imperial position was now so firmly established there were no significant dissensions recorded to his elevated status. His achievements had secured his legitimacy and he was even able to go further and claim divinity from birth – *deus et dominus natus* – which made all of his actions throughout his life divine.[93] Proclaiming such things and not having them affect his status shows the development of the nature of charismatic legitimacy over the course of the empire.[94] To have claimed god-like status would have risked de-legitimating a

[89] Gregory (2010), p. 29.

[90] Weber (1994a), p.32.

[91] *CIL* XI.6308 and *CIL* XI.6309.

[92] A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453: Volume 1*, (Madison, 1952), p. 61.

[93] RIC V.1 Aurelian 305-306. Coin 305 has the legend IMP DEO ET DOMINO AURELIANO AVG while Coin 306 has DEO ET DOMINO NATO AURELIANO AVG.

[94] A. Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: an Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, translated by J.M. Todd, (Chicago, 2000), p. 59.

regime in the early empire with Gaius and Domitian both promoting themselves as divine and not enjoying enduring regimes or reputations.[95]

There had been little profit for Caligula, Domitian and Commodus trying to be gods since their memories were damned after their deaths.[96] The attempts by these men to present themselves as god-like figures were not accepted by their contemporaries (Cass. Dio 73.15.1-16.1).[97] Commodus' eventual deification only came about because the Severan regime wanted to have divine ancestry and Septimius was claiming to be the son of Marcus Aurelius and the brother of Commodus (Cass. Dio 76.7.4).[98] Those emperors, like Commodus (Cass. Dio 73.16.1), who had aspired to such a status were not discredited by their desire to be a god alone, however, but also because of their erratic behaviour, the favour they showed to men who were from lowly backgrounds, such as freedmen or others considered unworthy sources of advice, and also their mismanagement of the administration of the empire (Dio 73.16.1-21.3).[99] These were not exemplary

[95] Besançon (2000), p. 59.

[96] R. Duncan-Jones, *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy*, (Cambridge, 1990), p. 168.

[97] Cass. Dio 73.15.1-16.1 shows the distaste Dio had for Commodus' desire to style himself as a god. Suet, *Gaius*, 22 mentions Gaius' desire to be treated as a god. Also see Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 11 for Domitian's desire to be addressed as lord and god. See B.W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian*, (London, 1992), p. 108 who assesses the evidence for Domitian and concludes that he was willing to be flattered by the use of the label by those who want to use it but did not insist on it. A.A. Barrett, *Caligula: Corruption of Power*, (London, 1989), p. 140 looks at Caligula's claim for god-like status. Also see Duncan-Jones, p. 168.

[98] I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, (Oxford, 2004), p. 350.

[99] See Dio 73.16.1-21.3 for examples of his behaviour which was looked down upon by Dio. A. Bowman, P. Garnsey and D. Rathbone, *The Cambridge Ancient History: The High Empire, AD 70-192*. (Cambridge, 2000), p. 209.

personal characteristics and did not, therefore, promote a belief in the charismatic authority of these emperors.[100]

Brauer does not believe that Aurelian would have claimed divine status from birth, however, and the evidence of one coin is insufficient to draw such a conclusion.[101] He also dismisses the idea that Aurelian was building a temple to the Sun in order to identify himself with his god.[102] However, building and restoring temples was a feature of emperors' attempts to honour the gods and restore religious practice to a central place in people's lives. Aurelian identified with Sol and it is entirely reasonable to have expected him to have built temples to show this identification (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 35). Although Elagabalus had attempted and failed to introduce the Emesan Sun-god as the principal god in Rome, there is no reason to think that over fifty years later another attempt would similarly fail. Elagabalus' failure was due to his excessive practices, not only as a chief priest of his god but also in his lifestyle in general, such as the debauched association Dio accuses him of forming with the chariot-driver Hierocles (Cass. Dio 80.15.1).[103] Had the practices associated with the sun-god been more in keeping with those which were familiar to the Romans, there is no reason that its introduction should not have been successful.[104]

---

[100] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[101] G.C. Brauer, *The Age of the Soldier Emperors: Imperial Rome*, *A.D. 244-284*. (Park Ridge, 1975), p. 230.

[102] Brauer (1975), p. 230.

[103] C. White, *The Emergence of Christianity*, (Westport, 2007), p. 119.

[104] M. Beard, J.A. North and S.R.F. Price, *Religions of Rome: A History*, (Cambridge, 1998), p. 259.

Far from being too sensible to repeat Elagabalus' mistakes, as Brauer asserts,[105] Aurelian may have learnt the lesson about how best to approach such an undertaking. The relationship between the emperors and the gods was, after all, being redefined by the emperors during this period. Aurelian's *antoniniani*, for example, depict him and Jupiter.[106] Traditionally the god would be expected to have been taller than Aurelian or some kind of signifier of deference would have been shown to the god. However, on this *antoninianus* they are both standing upright and the same height.[107] This imagery suggests to those who looked at it that Aurelian was of god-like stature and, therefore, above the stature of normal men. Aurelian's legitimacy, however, remained secure in spite of this association and, therefore, the link to the god, if it did not de-legitimate him, can be considered to have enhanced his status.

Links between emperors and the gods had always been an important part of their quest for legitimacy.[108] All emperors attempted to show their piety but the way they were linked changed over time and between emperors. By doing such things as parading images of the gods at ceremonies, emperors were showing the people the gods to whom they wished to be linked.[109] Gallienus associated himself with Jupiter and Hercules, which were the gods the tetrarchs would later identify

[105] Brauer (1975), p. 230.

[106] RIC V.1 Aurelian 48 and also others such as 260, 334 and 394.

[107] Brauer (1975), pp. 230-1. RIC V.1 Aurelian 48.

[108] Weber (1994a), p. 33.

[109] McCormick (1986), p. 21.

themselves with.[110] He is depicted on a gold aureus near the end of his reign wearing a lion skin which identifies him with Hercules.[111] In this regard he was following the lead of Commodus who had identified himself with Hercules (*HA*, *Comm.* 8.5-9).[112] Gallienus also associated himself with Apollo, Diana and Sol.[113] The association with Sol was also one that other emperors followed: both his immediate successors also revered this god. Claudius Gothicus' coinage referred to Sol.[114] Aurelian also identified strongly with Sol, and placed his portrait on the reverse of his coins. These also included the legends *Sol Invictus*, *Sol conservator*, *Sol Dominus Imperii Romani*.[115] These are all epithets that an emperor wished to be associated with. Sol was also considered to be a unifying force which is what Aurelian had sought to achieve militarily throughout the empire. He also wanted to restore traditional values, even if doing so by promoting himself as the intermediary on earth to the god was in a slightly new guise.[116] This was meant to create devotion to the sanctity of the emperor through his relationship with the gods.[117]

---

[110] See RIC V.1 Gallienus 595 for Hercules and RIC V.1 Gallienus 143 for Jupiter.

[111] RIC V.1 Gallienus 595.

[112] For examples of Commodus' coins depicting Hercules see RIC III Commodus 162, 254a, 254b, 399a, 399b, 409 and 424.

[113] See de Blois (1976), pp. 149-50 about Gallienus' identification with Hercules, pp. 163-164 for the identification with Apollo and Diana and pp. 165-169 for Sol Invictus.

[114] RIC V.1 Claudius 221 has the legend IMP C CLAVDIVS AVG on the obverse and SOL AVG on the reverse. RIC 153 and 155 also depict Sol.

[115] RIC V.1 Aurelian 390 has the legend SOL INVICTO on the reverse. RIC V.1 Aurelian 319 and 322 have AVRELIANVS AVG CONS on the reverse. Coin 319 has SOL DOMINUS IMPERI ROMANI on the obverse and 322 has SOL DOM IMP ROM.

[116] G. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, (Leiden, 1972), p. 137. Also see Watson (1999), p. 190.

[117] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

Diocletian identified himself with gods in a similar way and for a similar purpose to Aurelian but chose to revert to Jupiter and Hercules rather than *Sol Invictus* (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39).[118] They were both traditional Roman gods, whereas *Sol Invictus* had only recently gained a position of prominance as the leading god.[119] The relationship between Diocletian and Maximian was expressed in religious terms and they hoped that the association with these gods would help to unify people behind their regime and recall times that were perceived as more peaceful.[120] They promoted their association as soon as Maximian was elevated to the imperial fold and their partnership was linked with the partnership between the two gods, with Jupiter's role as the head god and Hercules' as his assistant mirroring the relationship between the emperors.[121] These names were also applied to military units and later to their Caesars, Galerius[122] and Constantius,[123] upon the creation of the tetrarchy when they forged the same link to the gods as their *Augustus*.[124] Diocletian had chosen to create the explicit links to Jupiter and Hercules rather than link the tetrarchs with any of their imperial predecessors. In this regard he was following Aurelian's lead. The success of Diocletian's tetrarchy

[118] S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. (London, 1985), pp. 58-59.

[119] C.R. Long, *The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome*, (Leiden, 1987), pp. 321-322. Also see Bowman, Garnsey and Cameron (2005), p. 171.

[120] C.M. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, (New York, 2004), p. 41.

[121] Odahl (2004), p. 41 and Rees (2004), p. 55. See RIC 5.2 288 no. 583 in which Maximian is shown receiving a globe from Diocletian. On RIC 5.2 295 no. 626 Diocletian has received a globe from Jupiter. These together help to show the order of precedence. This is also the case on the Edict of Maximum Prices where Diocletian is the first mentioned emperor ahead of Maximian (Leake (ed.), p. 8).

[122] RIC V.2 719 and RIC VI.436.

[123] RIC V.2 669 and 670 for example.

[124] A. Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430*, (London, 1993), pp. 31-32.

meant that those divine associations were initially continued by their successors and showed the routinisation which this aspect of charismatic authority had achieved at that time.[125]

Constantine, however, spurned the tetrarchic gods in favour of Apollo and Sol Invictus[126] and so evoked memories of Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian.[127] The link to Claudius was a deliberate ploy which tied in neatly with his claim to be descended from him and, consequently, rejected the tetrarchic ideal of how emperors should be appointed in favour of the dynastic one.[128] Disassociating himself from the tetrarchy's ideals made explicit his desire to rule himself and not as part of an imperial college.[129] Constantine worked with a similar philosophy to Aurelian which promoted the idea of the emperor as between the people and the god with one state, one god as the theme.[130] Coins were issued which depicted Constantine with Sol and advertised Sol's *invictus* status which was an epithet he could equally apply to himself and would be eager to be associated with.[131] He is also styled *Maximus Augustus*.[132] This was a title he was voted by the Senate

[125] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[126] R. MacMullen, *Constantine* (London, 1969), p. 61.

[127] RIC V.1 216 for an example of Claudius Gothicus' association with Apollo and RIC V.2 154 for Aurelian and Sol.

[128] Odahl (2004), p. 81.

[129] Odahl (2004), p. 81.

[130] P. Southern, *The Roman Empire From Severus to Constantine* (London, 2001), p. 124.

[131] RIC VII Constantine (London) 53-59, 68-79 and 88-95 are all examples of coins with SOL INVICTO COMITI as the legend.

[132] This title is on an inscription on the Arch of Constantine – see *CIL* VI.1139 IMP CAES FL CONSTANTINO MAXIMO PF AVGVSTO. This is also on coins. See RIC VII 154 – IMP CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG.

which shows his belief in his seniority as emperor above Licinius, whom he was then still acknowledging as his colleague.[133] The act of Constantine linking himself to Claudius and Sol was one which Licinius could not ignore.[134] In order to claim a significant antecedent of his own, he claimed lineage from Philip the Arab (*HA Gord*. 34.5).[135] Thus, through this association, he was seeking to claim deeper imperial roots than Claudius Gothicus provided Constantine. Both men, however, were trying to claim a routinisation of charismatic authority which was transmitted through their family's bloodline, with he who could claim the longer bloodline able to claim the he had the greater hereditary charisma.[136]

For some emperors, divine association was better than an earthly one because the failings of the men who had preceded them meant that there was little to be gained by claiming a dynastic link to them. Others made light of the failings of some of their predecessors and had them deified anyway. Septimius deified Commodus which according to the *Historia Augusta* was due to Septimius' hatred for the Senate (*HA Comm.* 17.11). This could have been one motive. Another could have been that he did so for the sake of his standing with the army by whom Commodus was well regarded.[137] This also allowed him to tie his regime to that of the Antonines and most importantly Marcus Aurelius, who enjoyed an outstanding

[133] H.A. Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine*. (London, 1996), pp. 38-39.

[134] I. Shahîd, *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs*, (Washington, 1984), p. 84.

[135] Licinius dicitur ..., cum se vellet videri a Philippis originem trahere.

[136] Weber (1994a), p. 39.

[137] J.B. Campbell. *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 BC – AD 235*. (Oxford, 1984), pp. 50-51.

reputation which had not been sullied by the excesses of his son.[138] This highlights the desire emperors had to associate themselves with those who preceeded them in order to claim their own imperial roots were longer than they really were. Ensuring the deification of predecessors also helped to enhance the status of these imperial roots by also giving the reigning emperor an association with the divine. This again was an example of an emperor seeking charismatic legitimacy from a charismatic association, with a divine bloodline carrying more authority than a mortal one.[139]

Macrinus did not initially act to deify or damn Caracalla because he had been well regarded by the troops and to have upset them would have risked destabilising his own position (Cass. Dio 79.17.2-3). Dio states that he thinks Macrinus wanted the Senate to condemn him so that his standing with the soldiers would not be undermined (Cass. Dio 79.17.3). Dio's portrait of him suggests that the Senate did want him condemned because of the hatred felt towards him (Cass. Dio 79.9.1). Therefore, avoiding the issue seems to have been the sensible option and the one Macrinus chose to take while he was establishing himself and could not afford to lose the support he had from either party.

The later Severans do not seem to have been men with whom it was profitable to have an association. Philip the Arab, for example, did not link himself to the Severan dynasty and stepped away from the tradition of deifying an imperial

[138] J.J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization: to 1500 Volume 1*, (Belmont, 2008), pp. 168-169.

[139] Weber (1994a), p. 39.

predecessor by deifying his father, Marinus.[140] This was unprecedented since Marinus had not been an emperor, but there were few emperors of the immediate past whose reputation warranted being associated with. Gordian III had been significantly younger than Philip and so he could not be claimed as a forebear and Philip's Arabian roots also meant that any link would easily be decried as fabrication since no previous emperor had come from there.[141] Emperors, therefore, seem to have associated themselves with gods when they could in order to increase their charismatic legitimacy.[142] They understood the value of the association for their standing with the people.

Septimius, as well as claiming an Antonine heritage (Cass. Dio 76.7.4), also honoured Trajan by making the successful attack on Ctespihon during his Parthian expedition on the centenary of Trajan's *dies imperii*.[143] A further link was his *Parthicus* title since it was one that Trajan had also been awarded (Cass. Dio 68.23.2 and 68.28.2).[144] This was a demonstration that Septimius' regime was one which would honour the past and wanted to link itself to the best of emperors.[145] Decius also awarded himself the honorary name Trajan.[146] There were no worthwhile imperial bloodlines to tie himself to in the more immediate past and this would also have evoked Septimius' honour of Trajan. Septimius' personal

[140] BMC 2. Vagi (2000), p. 330.

[141] J. Taylor, *Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataeans*, (London, 2002), p. 126.

[142] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[143] Birley (1971), p. 202. Although this claim is disputed. For the counter-argument, see Z. Rubin, 'Dio, Herodian and Severus' Second Parthian War' *Chiron* 5 (1975), pp. 431-437.

[144] RIC II 289 no 642. Bowman, Garnsey and Rathbone (2000), p. 124.

[145] Sayles (2007), p. 122.

[146] RIC 4.3 4 for example – IMP TRAIANVS DECIVS AVG. Brauer (1975), p. 19.

reputation would have been relatively undimmed but it can be concluded from Decius' choosing not to take his name directly that he did not think it was wise because those within his dynasty who followed him had tarnished the Severan name. Any desire any emperor would have had to link themselves to Septimius diminished significantly after Elagabalus' reign because to include the name Severus or Antoninus in the imperial titulature no longer evoked Septimius alone but his successors whose reputation was not so distinguished. Even Severus Alexander, who does not have the same ill-repute in the sources as Elagabalus and Caracalla, was seen as weak, indecisive and too much under the influence of his mother (Herodian 6.8.3).[147] He, consequently, was not worth having as an imperial prototype. Therefore, when the potential link to the past was too weak to enhance legitimacy, it was better not to make the link.[148] Elagabalus, meanwhile, did not have the personal characteristics which would mean that Roman people would believe in his charisma[149] so his was not a hereditary link worth having for the enhancement of an emperor's legitimacy.

That Elagabalus can be seen as the reason that later emperors chose not to link the Severan emperors to themselves can be shown by Macrinus, who was happy to take the Severan name (Cass. Dio 79.16.2). Only Caracalla and Septimius, however, had preceded him so the soldiers must have still thought highly enough

[147] ὅθεν οἱ νεανίαι, ἐν οἷς ἦν τὸ πολὺ πλῆθος Παιόνων μάλιστα, τῇ μὲν ἀνδρείᾳ τοῦ Μαξιμίνου ἔχαιρον, τὸν δὲ Ἀλέξανδρον ἐπέσκωπτον ὡς ὑπὸ τῆς [τε] μητρὸς ἀρχόμενον, καὶ διοικουμένων τῶν πραγμάτων ὑπ' ἐξουσίας τε καὶ γνώμης γυναικός, ῥᾳθύμως τε καὶ ἀνάνδρως τοῖς πολεμικοῖς προσφερομένου ἐκείνου.

[148] Weber (1994a), p. 39.

[149] Weber (1994a), pp. 32-33.

of them both to make the link worth having. He, therefore, took the name Severus to link himself to their dynasty (Cass. Dio 79.16.2). Severus Alexander's own claim to dynastic continuity harked back prior to Elagabalus to his link to Septimius, since he was related to him (see Herodian 5.3.2 and 5.7.1), as well as Marcus Aurelius because of Septimius' appropriation of the Antonine name. Even during Elagabalus' reign, because of Elagabalus' failings, Alexander was being pushed forward. Elagabalus adopted him and granted him the title of Caesar (Herodian 5.7.1-4), with the regret he quickly felt (Herodian 5.7.5) indicating how little control he had by the end of his reign. It also means that Alexander was not tarred by Elagabalus' acts because he was kept away from him and shown to the soldiers and people as a virtuous alternative emperor (Herodian 5.8.1-8). The association with Septimius rather than Elagabalus was what was aiding Severus Alexander's charismatic legitimacy through the hereditary link.

The titles that emperors received and publicised on coins and inscription were small reminders of their achievements. They did not have to be on such a small scale. The arch Septimius had built in the forum to celebrate his *Decennalia* was a visible reminder of his power for Senators whenever they emerged from the *curia* (Herodian 2.9.5-6). The meaning that any individual derived from this would be specific to that person,[150] but the intention of the emperor was to remind them of his power and success. The sculptures on the arch celebrated his success over Parthia and the inscription on the arch celebrates his rebuilding of the Republic, which although patently untrue, did draw parallels to the claim that Augustus

[150] A. Laird, '*Ut Figura Poesis*: Writing Art and the Art of Writing,' in J. Elsner, ed., *Art and Text in Roman Culture* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 98-99.

about giving the republic back to the people.[151] Constantine also built an arch for his *Decennalia*, with the text listing his achievements including the claim that he saved Rome from tyranny.[152] These arches displayed the grandeur of the regime and reflected the glory of the emperor responsible for building it. The military glory it represented showed the heroism of the emperor and this encouraged ongoing obedience to his rule because of his charismatic authority.[153]

The emperor's position as leader of the state was important and he needed to show his power as leader and protector of the state by being all things to all people.[154] Over time this came to require his standing to be above that of an ordinary mortal and he had to show his magnificence, invincibility and immortality.[155] Triumphs were the traditional way that Roman generals had displayed their power and invincibility and this ritual had promoted them as men who stood out from their peers. It testified to the power of Rome and celebrated the success of its mission of conquest and domination as well as the courage of its soldiers.[156] Above these

[151] See R. Brilliant, *The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum* (Rome, 1967), p. 91 for the inscription which Septimius had put onto the arch. He claimed OB REM PVBLICAM RESTITVTAM. In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus claimed *rem publicam ... in senatus populique ... transtuli* (*RG* 34.1).

[152] See N. Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Moesgard, 1986), p. 321. He claimed CUM EXERCITV SVO TAM DE TYRANNO QVAM DE OMNI EIVS FACTIONE VNO TEMPORE IVSTIS REMPVBLICAM VLTVS EST ARMIS. Note the parallel which can be drawn to Augustus who claimed *per quem rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem uindicaui* (*RG* 1.1).

[153] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[154] A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Emperor and His Virtues', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1981. Vol. 30, No. 3, p. 300.

[155] Cameron (1993), p. 42.

[156] C. Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen of Rome*, translated by P.S. Fulla (Berkeley, 1980), pp.

considerations, however, was the focus on the general and the favour he had been granted by the gods who ensured the ongoing prosperity of the empire.[157] McCormick believes that despite all of the changes that did occur to the nature of the imperial position, there was little change in the celebration of victories from the principate to the later empire.[158] It was in the triumphal ceremony that god and man had traditionally come as close as possible to one another.[159] The combination of the divine and the martial glory of the emperor, therefore, enhanced the belief in the charismatic authority of the emperor concerned.[160]

The late empire was, therefore, no different in this regard. Aurelian wanted to take Zenobia alive so she could be marched through Rome in his triumph, which is what happened (*HA Aurel.* 30.1-2, 33.2 and 34.3).[161] This alone was not enough to display his power, however, and he also took to wearing a diadem and his subjects were expected to perform obeisance.[162] Gallienus had worn the diadem and Aurelian may have seen that he needed to project an image that was greater than his predecessors since they had not, after all, achieved nearly as much as he had

352-356.

[157] H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden, 1970), p. 1.

[158] McCormick (1986), p. 11.

[159] Versnel (1970), p. 1.

[160] Weber (1994a), pp. 31-32.

[161] This contradicts Zosimus 1.59 who says she died on the way to Rome. See R. Ridley (trans and commentary), *Zosimus: A New History* (Canberra, 1982), p. 146, note 106 who believes that this may be to draw a parallel between Zenobia and Cleopatra.

[162] M.T.W. Arnheim, *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the Later Roman Empire*. (Oxford, 1972), p. 29.

(Eutr. 9.13).[163] Aurelian had had his problems and the tribes invading into Northern Italy had the potential to undermine his regime so when he was successful it was important to make sure everyone knew it (Eutr. 9.13).[164] Whether this success was temporary or not – and the number of emperors who had to keep fighting in the same areas shows that generally success only provided temporary respite from battle – it still needed to be publicised fully.[165] Other emperors who enjoyed less success than Aurelian throughout the course of their reigns still publicised any success which they had. Gallienus, for example, had a triumphal procession in Rome in order to celebrate his *decennalia* (*HA Gall* 7.4-9.1).[166] This was an achievement which he did not take lightly since it was thirty years since any other emperor had been able to claim to have ruled for this long and fifty since an adult was able to do so ruling in his own right, showing that maintaining sufficient legitimacy was difficult throughout this time.

Probus also celebrated a triumph (*HA Prob.* 19.2).[167] In this case it was for his victories over the Blemmyes from Nubia, various Germanic tribes and confederations of brigands from Asia Minor, all of which showed his successes all along the edges of the Roman world (*HA Probus* 19).[168] Severus Alexander's triumph for his victory over the Persians was described by the *Historia Augusta* as

[163] Aurelian succeeded in reuniting the empire, a task which had proved beyond Gallienus. Claudius had not managed it either due to the brevity of his reign.

[164] Watson (1999), p. 177.

[165] Southern (2001), p. 114.

[166] Brauer (1975), pp. 146-7.

[167] triumphavit de Germanis et Blemmyis, omnium gentium drungos usque ad quinquagenos homines ante triumphum duxit.

[168] Brauer (1975), p. 253.

triumpho pulcherrimo and he promised the people games and largess while proclaiming the riches he had captured (*HA Alex. Sev.* 56-58). There was no formal end to this war, however, since Alexander had had to return primarily to deal with problems on his northern frontiers (Herodian 6.7.1-4). Therefore, the triumph was probably more for show than any substantial success that the Romans enjoyed and probably seemed quite contrived to his soldiers. For the people of Rome, however, the display would have been important since it would have been designed to show them that their emperor was a successful military leader in the heroic mould of past Roman leaders and, consequently, boosted his charismatic legitimacy with them.[169] The triumphal style of an emperor was important at this time because of the huge amount of resources which went into the military and to which the people contributed. Everyone needed to know that the emperor had been successful because this confirmed his right to rule.[170]

The outlandish shows of deference, such as prostration, would have been shunned by many of the earlier emperors just as the claim to be a *deus* would have been. The elaborate ceremonial, however, would have been understandable to the peoples from outside the empire with whom the emperors had to deal. They would have seen the magnificence of the emperors and known they were the men in positions of authority.[171] The emperor had long been sacrosanct because of their tribunician powers but tribunes and men holding the tribunician power in the past had not styled themselves in a way that separated them in such a way from other

[169] Weber (1994a), pp. 31-32.

[170] McCormick (1986), pp. 4-5.

[171] Southern (2001), p. 154.

men as Aurelian and then the tetrarchs did. The ceremonial emphasised the relationship of the emperor with the divine and was, therefore, legitimising the reign through its enhanced charismatic authority.[172]

The increase in ceremonial and reorganisation of the administration by Diocletian were linked. The complex administration reflected the complex status the emperor now enjoyed with the emperor no longer *princeps* but elevated towards the gods.[173] Obeisance also dismissed any notion that there was some semblance of equality between the emperor and the Senate, such as existed earlier in the empire, since it put the subjects in a subservient position to the emperor (*Pan. Lat*. 11(3). 11.1-4).[174] Public appearances became stage managed with the clothing and jewellery designed to enhance his image and even the symbols of the emperor, such as his residence, became so large as to inspire awe and feelings of intimidation.[175] Diocletian maintained the formality and magnificence that had become associated with the imperial position including wearing a gold-brocaded robe, silk, purple, jewelled sandals, being addressed as lord, adored and addressed as a god (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39.2-4 / Eutr. 9.26).[176] The tetrarchs' elevated standing included elaborate rituals and ceremonies, ostentatious dress, imposing

[172] Weber (1994a), p. 31.

[173] Gregory (2010), p. 40.

[174] Williams (1985), p. 111.

[175] See Aurelius Victor *de Caes* 39.1-8 about the clothing and jewellery in which Diocletian was clad. N.H Ramage and A. Ramage, *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine* 2nd edition (London, 1995), p. 270 discusses the enormous buildings that were built as a sign of the renewal of the greatness of Rome.

[176] S. Price, 'From Noble Funerals to Divine Cult: the Consecration of Roman Emperors,' in D. Cannadine and S. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 98-99.

architecture and a large number of courtiers.[177] Access continued to be restricted and gold cloth and diadems were worn. Obeisance continued to be performed and was further refined as the emperors stylised themselves as more god-like than mortal (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39.2-4 / Eutr. 9.26).[178] The elevation of the emperors to having closer links to the gods increased their remoteness from other men as a consequence. The emperor had become accessible only through his officials and, although Constantine did promote his accessibility, this limited access did not actually change during his reign.[179] This, again, was showing the relationship the emperor enjoyed with the divine and was meant to increase his charismatic authority.[180]

Conclusions

The lengths which emperors went to in order to focus attention on any success which they had came about because of the pressure which they were under. The third century is littered with the corpses of emperors who were killed before their time and shows the need to keep the troops happy, as Septimius had foreshadowed to his sons (Cass. Dio 77.15.2). This occurred to emperors who were unable to sustain belief in their charisma because they did not show the exemplary characteristics which were needed in order to sustain the belief but does not necessarily come about from the enrichment of the troops alone.[181] Caracalla, for

[177] D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395*. (London, 2004), p. 288.

[178] Williams (1985), p. 111.

[179] S. Corcoran, 'Before Constantine'. In N. Lenski, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, (Cambridge, 2006), p. 43.

[180] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[181] Weber (1994a), pp. 32-33.

example, did enrich the troops but was still unable to stop the successful plot against him whilst he was with his army.

Septimius, Diocletian and Constantine were amongst the few who died natural deaths, with some others such as Claudius Gothicus dying from illness rather than assassination. Therefore, any success an emperor had needed to be used to promote their regime in order to reaffirm their legitimacy and to show that they were capable of maintaining the security of the empire. Victories needed to be publicised to have the desired boost to an emperor's standing and the triumphs, victory titles, images on coins and monuments as well as increasingly explicit links to the gods were all meant to serve this purpose. These helped to create a belief in the emperor's heroism, sanctity and exemplary character and, consequently, his charismatic legitimacy.[182] Septimius' legitimacy was enhanced by such things and most others received some boost to their *auctoritas* as a result of their successes and the publicity which they gave them. These characteristics, therefore, were in addition to the enrichment of the troops.

Success, however, needed to be genuine and needed to be maintained. Gallienus failed to enhance his legitimacy with the titles he claimed because of the failure to deal effectively with the loss of the western part of the empire and the apparent diminution of his authority in the east which were evident to one and all. Those who followed Gallienus had to show that they were better than he was and, therefore, their claims through their titles had to be more grandiose in order to

[182] Weber (1994a), pp. 31-32.

show their their charismatic qualities were superior.[183] Legitimacy through such means was difficult to maintain unless there was the ongoing military success with which to back it up. It could provide a short-term boost to a regime but this would only last as long as it took for the next political threat or military crisis to emerge. Emperors who sought to maintain their rule through their charisma alone were doomed to be overthrown eventually since over time charismatic authority needed to be routinised and traditional or legal authority became more important to the regime's legitimacy.[184]

[183] Weber (1994a), p. 32.

[184] Weber (1994a), p. 37.

Conclusion

The claim of legitimacy was essential for a regime to establish itself in power since only legitimate regimes were the unchallenged source of authority within a state.[1] When authority is unchallenged it means there is compliance to the regime's commands while those who are not considered legitimate find their right to rule challenged.[2] Therefore, those subject to a regime need to believe in the right to rule of those in power.[3] There is no agreement amongst scholars, however, as to what exactly makes a regime legitimate with academic debate leading to the existence of a multitude of theories.[4] This thesis has examined the issue of legitimacy using the model proposed by Max Weber, who was one of the earliest and most influential scholars in the field.[5]

The three legitimation principles espoused by Weber – proclaimed legality, tradition and charisma[6] – all allowed each instance of an emperor establishing and maintaining his legitimacy to be explained. This categorisation does not pass judgement on the desirability of the political system being considered and each of

[1] C. Kadushin, 'Power Circles and Legitimacy in Developed Societies' in B. Denitch, ed., *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis* (London, 1979), p. 132.

[2] D. Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (London, 1991), p. 139.

[3] M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968), p. 946.

[4] For examples of different ideas of what can constitute a legitimate regime see M. Weber, *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, translated and introduced by H. P. Secher (London, 1962), pp. 81-83 and Beetham (1991), pp. 15-24.

[5] W. Heydebrand, 'Introduction' in M. Weber, *Sociological Writings*, edited by W. Heydebrand, (New York, 1994), p. vii.

[6] Weber (1962), pp. 81-83.

these categories can stand alone as a way of explaining an emperor's legitimacy.[7] Weber's theory does accommodate all different types of regimes and provide a basis for assessing their legitimation and ongoing legitimacy.

In the third century, the army was prominent in making and breaking regimes. According to the advice Cassius Dio believed Septimius Severus gave to his sons, legitimacy could be achieved by there being harmony in the imperial family or college, enriching the soldiers and not being concerned by anyone else (Cass. Dio. 77.15.2). He was, therefore, making the importance of ensuring the ongoing support of the army for a regime's legitimacy explicit and believed that this was the way to ensure there were no challenges to an emperor's authority and compliance to his commands.

Numerous emperors throughout the third century faced challenges to their authority regardless of whether they enriched the troops or not. Septimius' son, Caracalla, provided an example of this since he did enrich the soldiers and was very popular with them (Herodian 4.7.4). He did not, however, sustain his authority and was overthrown (Herodian 4.13.1-6 and Cass. Dio.79.6.4). Many other emperors were also deposed when their right to rule was challenged. Gallienus provides an example with a number of usurpation attempts destabilising his legitimacy and resulting in a fragmented empire (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 33). In spite of this he had remained popular with the majority of the troops under his command (Zos 1.41.1). The deposition of Severus Alexander (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 24)

[7] R. Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford, 1990), p.77.

and Trebonianus Gallus (Zos. 1.28.3) also demonstrated the consequences for an emperor when their right to rule was challenged through their failure to show suitable martial prowess. Their shortcomings were not because of their failure to enrich the troops alone. The emperors mentioned in these examples all had been established, legitimate emperors prior to their right to rule being challenged.

In order to be considered a legitimate emperor in the first place, emperors needed to be proclaimed. Merely declaring one's self or having one's own troops issue a proclamation was not enough. In order to be considered legitimate, this declaration needed to come from a legal source.[8] The Senate and the army were these sources and, later in the time discussed, the approval of the other emperors within the imperial college was the acknowledged source of legitimacy. All of those who ruled during this period were proclaimed in at least one of these ways. The story of the third century was one in which the army was supreme, with the Senate having a diminishing role to play so it was imperative that in every case the army approved of the man who was in charge. The Senate, however, did consist of former office holders in the Roman state and, consequently, was a legal source of legitimacy. The army could enforce obedience through coercion and this was recognised in the Roman world (Cass. Dio 57.24.5). A distinguishing feature of a state is that it controls the means of coercion.[9]

[8] Weber (1968), pp. 215-216.

[9] M. Weber, 'Legitimacy, Politics and the State' in *Legitimacy and the State*, edited by W.Connelly, (Oxford, 1984), p. 33.

In Rome, it was the emperor who controlled the army, although this could prove difficult when disaffection occurred, as shown by those emperors the army overthrew, with Trebonianus Gallus (Zos. 1.28.3) and Severus Alexander (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 24) again providing examples. They had, however, suffered from a delegitimation of their authority by the time they were overthrown. When there was imperial control over the troops, however, the legitimacy of an emperor was secure and he, therefore, controlled the means of coercion. For this reason, the Senate was unable to challenge an emperor supported by the army regardless of its legal status. This demonstrates that maintaining control of the means of coercion was important for ensuring legitimacy and, consequently, supports somewhat the assertion Dio claimed Septimius made about the importance of the troops, although enriching them was by no means the only way to ensure their support. Severus Alexander's death, for example, shows that the troops were also concerned for the welfare of their loved ones (Herodian 6.7.3). Ultimately, during the course of the third century, the Senate was not consulted at all and the army had become the only authoritative source for a legal proclamation prior to Diocletian and the tetrarchy. Carus provided the first example of a legitimate emperor not bothering to seek their approval (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 38).

Septimius himself was proclaimed by the troops (Zos 1.8.1) and this was later ratified by the Senate (Cass. Dio 76.8.5). That he considered it necessary for there to be Senatorial approval of his position does show that he did not consider it necessary to despise all others when he was trying to secure his legitimacy. There was not, however, harmony. Before establishing himself in power, Septimius had

to deal with other contenders. This was relatively easily achieved against Julianus (*HA Did. Iul.* 8.6-7), but Albinus was offered the Caesarship in order to prevent Septimius having to face threats to his position from the east and the west (Cass. Dio 74.15.2). This should have meant that there would be harmony between the two men but after Septimius had picked off Niger, he initiated civil war with Albinus (Cass. Dio 76.4.1). As the victor, Septimius emerged with his legitimacy undiminished. He did, however, follow what Dio claimed he espoused to his sons in regard to enriching the soldiers (see Herodian 2.14.5 and 3.8.4-5).

Diocletian provided an example of an emperor who worked harmoniously with his colleagues in power (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 39). The tetrarchy, however, did not survive once pressure was exerted by disaffected potential-emperors who had been overlooked for promotion. The dynastic claims of Maxentius and Constantine meant that they both thought they should have received a promotion into the imperial college and had themselves declared emperors (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40). Constantine was successful in pushing his claim and was recognised as a legally proclaimed emperor. He did not work harmoniously with his colleagues, however, and claimed dynastic attachments pre-dating the tetrarchy in order to promote his own standing (*Pan. Lat.* 6(7).2.1-3). Ultimately, when he defeated and removed Licinius from his position, he had ensured that there was no longer a tetrarchy, merely a Constantinian dynasty which he headed with sons waiting to succeed him.

Legally proclaimed emperors, in order to maintain their position, needed to perform the functions expected of a *princeps*. This was the traditional expectation of an emperor. Having traditional authority meant that a leader exercised power in the ways which had been established in the society throughout the generations and their actions were bound by these traditions if they wished to maintain their authority.[10] The imperial role had become a traditional one by the time of Septimius' accession with more than two centuries having passed since Augustus had become the first *princeps*. There is no evidence to suggest that any other form of governing the Roman Empire was considered during the turmoil of the third century. In fact, the prevalence of the number of men aspiring to be recognised as the legitimate emperor shows the strength of the institution even though many of the actual men in the role were not strong leaders themselves. Performing the roles traditionally expected of them would allow them to maintain the loyalty of these groups which conferred their legitimacy.

The factors which belong in the traditional category were maintaining the security of the empire and ensuring the judicial and administrative systems were working effectively.[11] Emperors were also expected to respect the role of the gods in Roman society.[12] In addition tradition decreed that the emperor had to be a man from the right social background, meaning that they were from the Senatorial order. The maintenance of the empire's security was the critical aspect of the

[10] Weber (1968), p. 215.

[11] A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Emperor and His Virtues', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1981. Vol. 30, No. 3, p. 300.

[12] Wallace-Hadrill (1981), p. 300.

imperial role. Emperors throughout this period spent a lot of time either defending the empire or campaigning in enemy territory. Septimius was an example of an emperor who was successful in maintaining the empire's security (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 20). His successes, notably against the Parthians, meant that he consolidated his standing with the troops and ensured their was no discontent in the ranks which could threaten their position. The examples of Trebonianus Gallus (Zos. 1.28.3) and Severus Alexander (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 24), however, showed that failing to maintain the empire's security or bargaining with enemies and, consequently, displaying weakness resulted in discontent amongst the troops and a crisis of legitimation for these men.

The emperor was expected to provide the empire with stable administration as a part of their traditional functions, as demonstrated by the praise given to Septimius by Dio (Cass. Dio 77.17.2). His role as paymaster to the troops was what promoted the need for administrative efficiency. Diocletian's edict on maximum prices[13] provides an example of one way in which an emperor tried to solve this problem. The taxes which needed to be collected in order to ensure the troops were paid, however, were not popular. The disaffection which might result can be seen when Gordian I was proclaimed emperor in response to the harsh nature of Maximinus Thrax's administration (Herodian 7.4.2). This shows that the people could have an effect on an emperor's legitimacy, although they played a largely anonymous role throughout the majority of the period. It also shows that the mismanagement of the empire's governance could affect the emperor's

[13] See W.M. Leake, (ed.), *An Edict of Diocletian, fixing a Maximum of Prices throughout the Roman Empire*, (London, 1826), p. 8.

traditional legitimacy. Another expectation within this sphere was the judicial expectations of the emperors and their representatives. The law was expected to be upheld. Diocletian[14] and Septimius (Cass. Dio 77.17.2) have both left evidence of their attendance to their judicial duties and these were both men whose reigns were long and successful. Their performance of their expected duties contributed to their ongoing legitimacy and this was, therefore, not entirely related to the enrichment of the soldiers.

The religious fanaticism of Elagabalus did not comply with that which was expected in Rome and this was another traditional aspect of leadership in Roman society which an emperor was supposed display (Herodian 5.5.7-5.6.10). Apart from Elagabalus, each of the emperors during the period did show the gods the respect expected in the way expected and so fulfilled their traditional role in this regard. Elagabalus' behaviour showed that untraditional extreme behaviour, including that of a religious nature, could have an adverse effect on an emperor's legitimacy. The un-Roman practice which Elagabalus displayed was one of the variety of the reasons he was delegitimated and shows the problem for failing to fulfill the expected duties for a Roman emperor in respect to the divine. Conversely, those who did fulfill this function contributed to their own ongoing legitimacy. These religious functions, however, do not relate to the idea of enriching the soldiers and despising all others so, in this regard, there was more to imperial legitimacy than what Septimius was said to have claimed.

[14] See S. Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284-324*. (Oxford, 1996), p. 1f.

The other form of authority emperors could demonstrate in order to ensure the legitimacy of their regime was charismatic legitimacy. This existed when emperors were able to demonstrate their exemplary characteristics such as the success of their troops in battle and their relationship with the gods.[15] It was focused on the individual's qualities rather than the institutional expectations of traditional legitimacy and allowed emperors to exercise their authority over others on the basis of these qualities.[16] Victory titles provided an example of how an emperor would broadcast his success. These titles would appear on coins[17] or in imperial edicts and they showed the people and soldiers that the empire was in safe hands. Examples include those listed in Diocletian's edict on maximum prices which listed the numerous victories the ruling regime had enjoyed against the Sarmatians, Germans and Britains amongst others.[18]

The emperors' personal relationships which they claimed to have with the gods were a charismatic element of legitimacy whereas the respect shown to the gods through the performance of sacrifices was a traditional expectation of the emperor's role.[19] Examples of this element of charismatic legitimacy are most prevalent in the latter half of the century with Aurelian's claim to be *deus et*

[15] C. Noreňa, 'The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91 (2001), p. 146.

[16] Weber (1968), p.215.

[17] For example, Septimius advertises his success against Parthia with the title PART MAX on his coinage. See RIC 4.1 167a.

[18] See Leake (ed.) (1826), p. 8.

[19] See Wallace-Hadrill (1981), p. 300 for the traditional roles an emperor was expected to play. See R. Rees. *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*. (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 50 for emperors linking themselves to gods.

dominus[20] and Diocletian and Maximian's relationship to Jupiter and Hercules (Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 39) being the most notable. The ceremonial which came to surround the emperor and the elaborate dress which also distinguished him from other men and added to the perception that he was something other than an ordinary man. This perception became increasingly important because of the continuing crises of legitimacy that emperors had experienced through the middle of the third century which meant that there was a need for the people and the army to see the emperor as beyond an ordinary man and ensure there was distance between them and him. Aurelian and the tetrarchs are again the examples for this increase in ceremonial, although Aurelian was not successful in avoiding assassination.

Triumphs were another highly visible way to celebrate emperors' successes. Triumphs were also ceremonies with heavy religious elements and throughout the third century the relationship of the emperor to the gods became closer and closer. In the case of Elagabalus, this did not enhance his legitimacy at all. His god was not one with which Rome and his soldiers identified. Others who emphasised an association to the gods, such Aurelian, showed himself in league with those who were believed to provide protection for the empire. This personal association was designed to enhance the standing of the emperor. This was a charismatic element which helped to build the legitimacy of the emperor and presented him as being beyond an ordinary man.

[20] A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453: Volume 1*, (Madison, 1952), p. 61.

The charismatic nature of authority, therefore, does not necessarily need to enrich the soldiers to be successful but it was certainly helpful. Success in battle does, however, mean that emperors were able to gain financially through the *aurum coronarium*.[21] This money, as well as spoils taken from the enemy, were methods emperors could use to gather money to give to the troops. This meant soldiers were keen to fight rather than accept negotiated settlements. What was not related to the enrichment of the troops, however, was the relationship which emperors created with the divine.

Charismatic authority is not stable enough in its own right to ensure the ongoing long-term legitimacy of a regime. It is expected that over time, it will be routinised and take a legal or traditional form.[22] Even though each of the legitimation principles Weber espoused can act independently, this does show that there is a relationship between them. For example, the celebration of victories over foreign enemies by taking victory titles enhanced an emperor's charismatic legitimacy. This was related to the traditional expectation that the emperor will maintain the security of the empire. Septimius, for example, used the title *Parthicus Maximus* after defeating the Parthians.[23] These victory titles had to have substance, however, with Gallienus taking the same title for victories over Parthia (Zonar 24) when Odaenathus had control over the area and Gallienus' influence was minimal. Philip the Arab also took this title but had negotiated a settlement

[21] J. Bray, *Gallienus: A Study in Reformist and Sexual Politics* (Kent Town, 1997) p. 202.

[22] Weber (1994a), p. 37.

[23] See RIC 4.1 55cf and RIC 4.1 167a for examples.

rather than actually defeating his foe.[24] Consequently, even though the titles promoted their success, these emperors did not gain in the long-term because their charismatic legitimacy was not routinised. The troops would have known Philip the Arab's campaign had not been successful and the empire remained fragmented under Gallienus regardless of his claim.

Consequently, the need for harmony and enriching the soldiers while despising all others has been demonstrated to have been insufficient on its own to maintain an emperor's legitimacy as demonstrated when considering legitimacy in relation to the principles espoused by Weber's theory of the legitimation of regimes. Harmony does not seem to have been an overriding factor for any regime. Caracalla consolidated his power without it and Constantine dismantled the tetrarchy with there being little harmonious about his overall relationship with his colleagues prior to his assumption of sole command. Greater harmony, however, may have helped Balbinus and Pupienus Maximus consolidate their rule as it had helped Diocletion through the dyarchic and tetrarchic periods.

Enriching the troops was important but emperors could find themselves endangered by other factors as well. If Septimius did indeed exhort his sons to enrich the soldiers in order to secure their legitimacy, he may have been right but they also had to believe that their emperor was someone who could lead them to success and keep peace within the empire.[25] Very few new regimes managed to

[24] CIL III.4634 (Partico Maximo) and III.10619 (Parthico Maximo).

[25] Wallace-Hadrill (1981), p. 300.

consolidate themselves in the longer term because of the pressure they faced from without and also from within. Regime change occurred regularly because too many emperors could not show the troops that they were worthy leaders and so de-legitimated themselves in their eyes. Septimius' statement when measured against the legitimacy of an emperor is, therefore, the truth, but not the whole truth.

Bibliography:

Ancient Texts:

Ammianus Marcellinus, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, translated by J.C. Rolfe, London, 1935.

Ammianus Marcellinus, *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt: Volume 1*, edited by W. Seyfarth with an introduction by L. Jacob-Karau and I Ulmann, Leipzig, 1978.

Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire: A.D. 354 – 378*, translated by W. Hamilton with an introduction by A. Wallace-Hadrill. London, 1986.

Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: the Achievements of the Divine Augustus*, introduction and commentary by P.A. Brunt and J.M. Moore, London, 1967.

Aurelius Victor, *Livre des Césars*, translated by P. Dufraigne, Paris, 1975.

Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, translated with an introduction and commentary by H.W. Bird, Liverpool, 1994.

Cassius Dio, *Dio's Roman History*, translated by E. Cary, London, 1925.

Cyprian, *The Writings of Cyprian: Bishop of Carthage*, translated by R.E. Wallis, Edinburgh, 1868.

Cyprian, *Letters (1-81)*, translated by Sister R.B. Donna, Washington DC, 1964.

Cyprian, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, translated and annotated by G.W. Clarke, New York, 1984.

Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*, introduction, translation and commentary by A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, Oxford, 1999.

Eutropius, *The Breviarium ab urbe condita of Eutropius, the right honourable secretary of state for general petitions: dedicated to Lord Valens Gothicus Maximus and perpetual emperor*, translated with and introduction and commentary by H.W. Bird, Liverpool, 1993.

Eutropius, *Eutropii Breviarium ab urbe condita*, edited by C. Santini. Leipzig, 1979.

Historia Augusta, *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, translated by D. Magie, London, 1968.

Herodian, *Herodian in Two Volumes*, translated by C.R. Whittaker, London, 1959.

Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, edited and translated by J.L. Creed, Oxford, 1984.

*Panegyrici Latini: In Praise of Later Roman Emperor*s, introduction, translation and commentary by C.E.V. Nixon and B.S. Rodgers, Berkeley, 1994.

Polybius, *The Histories*, translated by W.R. Paton, London, 1927.

Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives: in eleven volumes*, translated by B. Perrin, London, 1914.

Tacitus, *The Histories*, translated by C.F. Moore, Cambridge, Mass, 1937.

Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum*, commentary by C. Ducangii and edited by L. Dindorfius. Lipsiae, 1875,

Zosimus, *Zosimi comitis et exadvocati fisci Historia nova*, edited by L. Mendelssohn, Lipsiae, 1887.

Zosimus, *Historia Nova: the Decline of Rome*, translated by J.J. Buchanan and H.T. Davis, San Antonio, 1967.

Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle*, translated by F. Paschoud, Paris, 1971.

Zosimus, *New History*, translation and commentary by R.T. Ridley, Canberra, 1982.

Secondary Literature:

Alföldy, G. *The Social History of Rome*, Beckenham, 1985.

Ando, C. *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*. Berkeley, 2000.

Andreae, B., *The Art of Rome*, translated by R. E. Wolf. London, 1978.

Arnheim, M.T.W. *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the Later Roman Empire*. Oxford, 1972.

Ball, W. *Rome in the East: the Transformation of an Empire*, London, 2000.

Barker, R. *Political Legitimacy and the State*. Oxford, 1990.

Barnes T.D. 'The Family and Career of Septimius Severus', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1967. Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 87-107.

Barnes T.D. *The Sources of the Historia Augusta*. Brussels, 1978.

Barnes T.D. *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981.

Barnes T.D. *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Cambridge, Mass., 1982.

Barrett, A.A. *Caligula: Corruption of Power*, London, 1989.

Bauman, R. *Human Rights in Ancient Rome*, London, 2000.

Baynes, N.H. 'Three Notes on the Reforms of Diocletian and Constantine". *Journal of Roman Studies*, 1925, Volume 15, pp. 195-208.

Beard, M., North, J.A. and Price, S.R.F. *Religions of Rome: A History*, Cambridge, 1998.

Beetham, D. *The Legitimation of Power*. London, 1991.

Bendix, R. and Turner, B.S. *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*. London, 1998.

Besançon, A. *The Forbidden Image: an Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, translated by J.M. Todd, Chicago, 2000.

Bianchi Bandinelli, R., *Rome: the Late Empire, AD. 200 – 400*, translated by P. Green. London, 1971.

Bird, H.W. *Sextus Aurelius Victor: A Historiographical Study*. Liverpool, 1984.

Bird, H.W. trans. and commentary, *The Breviarium ab Urbe Condita of Eutropius The Right Honourable Secretary of State for General Petitions: Dedicated to Lord Valens Gothicus Maximus & Perpetual Emperor*. Liverpool, 1993.

Birley, A. *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor*, London, 1971.

Birley, A. *The African Emperor: Septimius Severus*, London, 1988.

Birley, A. *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*, New York, 2000

Birley, A. *The Roman Government of Britain*, Oxford, 2005.

Birley, A. 'Making Emperors. Imperial Instrument or Instrumental Force?' in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, MA., 2007.

Bonamente, G. and Paschoud, F. *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Genevense*, Macerata, 1994.

Bowman, A., Garnsey, P. and Cameron, A. *The Cambridge Ancient History: The Crisis of Empire, AD 193-337*, Cambridge, 2005.

Bowman, A., Garnsey, P. and Rathbone, D. *The Cambridge Ancient History: The High Empire, AD 70-192*. Cambridge, 2000.

Brauer, G.C. *The Young Emperors: Rome AD 193-244*, New York, 1967.

Brauer, G.C. *The Age of the Soldier Emperors: Imperial Rome*, *A.D. 244-284*. Park Ridge, 1975.

Bray, J. *Gallienus: A Study in Reformist and Sexual Politics*, Kent Town, 1997.

Brilliant, R. *The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum*. Rome, 1967.

Brilliant, R. 'The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, Volume 29, (1967), pp. 5-271.

Brunt, P.A. 'The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime', *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 34, No 2. (1984), pp. 423-444.

Burckhardt, J. *The Age of Constantine the Great*, Berkeley, 1983.

Burger, M. *The Shaping of Western Civilization: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, Toronto, 2008.

Cameron, A. *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430*, London, 1993.

Campbell, J.B. *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 BC – AD 235*. Oxford, 1984.

Campbell, J.B. *The Roman Army, 31BC-AD337: A Sourcebook*, London, 1994.

Campbell, J.B. *War and Society in Imperial Rome 31 BC – AD 284*. London, 2002.

Chambers, M. 'The Crisis of the Third Century' in L. White, Jr. ed. *The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbon's Problems after Two Centuries*, pp. 30-58. Berkeley, 1966.

Chastagnol, A. *Le Senat Romain à l'Époque Impériale*, Paris, 1992.

Cherry, D. ed., *The Roman World: A Sourcebook*. Malden, Ma., 2001.

Christol, M. *L'Empire Romain du IIIe Siècle: histoire politique 192-325 aprés J.-C.* Paris, 1997.

Ciacci, M. ‘Legitimacy and the Problems of Goverance.’ In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 20-28. New York, 1986.

Cizak, E. *L’Empereur Aurélien et son Temps*. Paris, 1994.

Clark, G. *Christianity and Roman Society*, Cambridge, 2004.

Coleman-Norton, P.R., Johnson, A.C., Bourne, F.C. and Pharr, C. *Ancient Roman Statues: A Translation with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary and Index*, Clark, NJ, 2003.

Connelly, W. 'Introduction: Legitimacy and Modernity' in *Legitimacy and the State*, edited by W.Connelly, pp. 1-19. Oxford, 1984.

Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum: consilio et auctoritate litterarum regiae borussicae editum, Berolini, 1869f.

Corcoran, S. *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284-324*. Oxford, 1996.

Corcoran, S. 'Before Constantine'. In N. Lenski, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 35-58.

Cornell, T. *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c1000-264BC)*, London, 1995.

Cranston, M. 'From Legitimism to Legitimacy.' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 36-43. New York, 1986.

Crees, J. *The Reign of the Emperor Probus*. London, 1922.

Crook, J. *Consilium Principis: Imperial Councils and Counsellors from Augustus to Diocletian*. Cambridge, 1955.

Davies, J.P. *Rome's Religious History: Livy, Tacitus and Ammianus on their Gods*. Cambridge, 2004.

de Blois, L. *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus*, Leiden, 1976.

de Blois, L. 'Traditional Virtues and New Spiritual Qualities in Third Century Views of Empire, Emperorship and Practical Politics' in *Mnemosyne*, Vol 47 No 2, April 1994, pp. 166-177.

de Quincey, T. *The Caesars*, Charlston, 2007.

Dihle, A. *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire: from Augustus to Justinian*, trans. M. Malzahn, London, 1994.

Dmitriev, S. '"Good Emperors" and Emperors of the Third Century' in *Hermes* Vol 132 No 2, 2004. pp. 211-224.

Dmitriev, S. 'Traditions and Innovations in the Reign of Aurelian' in *The Classical Quarterly* Vol 54 No 2, December 2004. pp. 568-578.

Dirven, L. *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*, Leiden, 1999.

Drinkwater, J. 'Maximinus to Diocletian and the "Crisis"' in A. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A.Cameron (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd Edition, Vol. 12: The Crisis of Empire AD 193-337*. (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 28-66.

Drbal, V. 'The Roman Empire in the IIIrd Century: Political History (from 192, Death of Commodus to 325, Council of Nicea), *Listy Filologicke* 131(1-2), 2008, pp. 292-296.

Drummond, S.K. and Nelson, L.H. *The Western Frontiers of Imperial Rome*. New York, 1994.

Duncan-Jones, R. *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy*, Cambridge, 1990.

Dyson, K. *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, Oxford, 1980.

Edwell, P. and Edwell, P.M. *Between Rome and Persia: the Middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman Control*, Abingdon, 2008.

Ephemeris Epigraphica: corpus inscriptionum Latinarum supplementum, Oxford, 1881.

Erdkamp, P. *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, 2007.

Farrokh, K. *Shadows in the Desert: Ancient Persia at War*, Oxford, 2007.

Ferrarotti, F. 'Legitimacy, Hegemony and Domination: Gramsci – With and Versus Lenin.' In *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis*, edited by B. Denitch, pp. 101-123. London, 1979.

Fishwick, D. *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire Volume II,1*. Leiden, 1991.

Gilliver, K., Goldsworthy, A.K. and Whitby, M. *Rome at War: Caesar's Legacy*, Oxford, 2005.

Goodman, M. and Sherwood, J. *The Roman World, 44BC-AD180*, London, 1997.

Gradel, I. *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford, 2004.

Grafstein, R. 'The Failure of Weber's Concept of Legitimacy', *Journal of Politics*, 43 (1981), pp. 456-472.

Grant, M. *The Emperor Constantine*, London, 1993.

Grant, M. *The Severans: The Changed Roman Empire*. London, 1996.

Gregory, T.E. *A History of Byzantium*, Malden, 2010.

Habermas, J. *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by T. McCarthy. London, 1976.

Halsberghe, G. *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, Leiden, 1972.

Hamilton, P. *Max Weber: Critical Assessments, Volume 1*. London, 1991.

Hammond, M. 'The Transmission of the Powers of the Roman Emperor from the Death of Nero in AD 68 to that of Alexander Severus in AD 235' in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*. 1956. Vol. 24, pp. 61-133.

Hannestad, N. *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*. Moesgard, 1986.

Harl, K. *Coinage in the Roman Economy: 300 BC to AD 700*. Baltimore, 1996.

Heather, P.J. *The Fall of the Roman Empire: a new history of Rome and the Barbarians*, Oxford, 2006.

Heckster, O. *Commodus: An Emperor at the Crossroads*, Amsterdam, 2002.

Heckster, O with Zair, N. *Rome and its Empire: AD 193-284*. Edinburgh, 2008.

Heydebrand, W. 'Introduction' in M. Weber, *Sociological Writings*, edited by W. Heydebrand. New York, 1994.

Hodgett, G. *A Social and Economic History of Medieval Europe*, Abingdon, 2006.

Hooper, F. *Roman Realities*. Detroit, 1978.

Hopkins, K. *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies on Roman History Volume 1*. Cambridge, 1978.

Horowitz, I.L. 'The Norm of Illegitimacy – Ten Years Later.' In *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis*, edited by B. Denitch, pp. 23-35. London, 1979.

Hoskinson, J. *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*. London, 2000.

Howe, L.L. *The Praetorian Prefect from Commodus to Diocletian*. Chicago, 1942.

Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, edited by H. Dessau. Berolini, 1892-1916.

Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania, edited by J.M. Reynolds and J.B. Ward Perkins, Rome, 1952.

Jones, A.H.M. *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey*. Oxford, 1973.

Jones, B.W. *The Emperor Domitian*, London, 1992.

Kadushin, C. 'Power Circles and Legitimacy in Developed Societies.' In *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis*, edited by B. Denitch, pp. 127-141. London, 1979.

Kelly, C. 'Bureaucracy and Government'. In N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Cambridge, 2006.

Kenny, E.J. *Latin Literature*. Cambridge, 1982.

Keppie, L.J.F. *Understanding Roman Inscriptions*, Baltimore, 1991.

Kettenhofen, E. 'Septimius Severus'. *Historische Zeitschrift*, 286(1), February 2008, pp. 156-157.

Khuri Hitti, P. *History of Syria: Including Lebanon and Palestine*. Piscataway, NJ. 2004, p. 345.

King, C. 'Roman Portraiture: Images of Power?' in G.M. Paul and M. Ierardi (eds.), *Roman Coins and Public Life under the Empire: E. Togo Salmon Papers II*. Ann Arbor, 2002, pp. 123-136.

Kitromilides, P. 'Enlightenment and Legitimacy.' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 60-66. New York, 1986.

Kleiner, D.E.E. *Cleopatra and Rome*, Cambridge, Mass., 2005.

Kneissl, P. *Die Siegestitulator der Römischen Kaiser*, Göttingen, 1969.

Knipfing, J.R. 'The *Libelli of the Decian Persecution', The Harvard Theological Review*, 16(1923), pp. 345-390.

König, I. *Die Gallischen Usurpatorem von Postumus bis Tetricus*. Munich, 1981.

Laird, A. '*Ut Figura Poesis*: Writing Art and the Art of Writing,' in J. Elsner, ed., *Art and Text in Roman Culture*, pp. 75-102. Cambridge, 1996.

Lane, D. 'Soviet Industrial Workers: The Lack of a Legitimation Crisis?' In *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis*, edited by B. Denitch, pp. 177-194. London, 1979.

L'Année Epigraphique: revue des publications epigraphiques relatives a l'antiquite romaine, Paris, 1888f.

Lauffer, S. *Diokletians Preisedickt.* Berlin, 1971.

Leader-Newby, R. *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, Aldershot, 2004.

Leake, W.M. (ed.), *An Edict of Diocletian, fixing a Maximum of Prices throughout the Roman Empire*, London, 1826.

Le Bohec, Y. *The Roman Imperial Army*, New York, 1994.

Lenski, N. 'The Reign of Constantine' in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Cambridge, 2006. pp. 59-90.

Levick, B. *Vespasian*. London, 1999.

Levick, B. *Julia Domna: Syrian Empress*. London, 2007.

Long, C.R. *The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome*, Leiden, 1987.

Loriot, X. and D. Nony. *La Crise de 'Empire Romain 235-285*. Paris, 1997.

Lowell Field, G. and J. Higley, 'Elites, Insiders, and Outsiders: Will Western Political Regimes Prove Non-Viable?' In *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis*, edited by B. Denitch, pp. 141-159. London, 1979.

Lowenthal, R. 'Political legitimacy and cultural change in West and East', *Social Research*, 49 (1979), pp. 401-435.

MacCormack, S. *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, 1981.

MacDonald, D. 'The Death of Gordian III: Another Tradition'. *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1981. Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 502-508.

Mackay, C.S. *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History*, Cambridge, 2004.

MacMullen, R. *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire*. Cambridge, Mass., 1966.

MacMullen, R. *Constantine*. London, 1969.

Machiavelli, N. *The Prince*. Trans. by G. Bull, London, 1981.

Mattern, S. *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate*. Berkeley, 2002.

Mattingly, H. 'The Reign of Aemilian: A Chronological Note', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 25 (1935), pp. 55-58.

Mattingly, H (ed.), *Roman Imperial Coinage*, London, 1923f.

Mattingly, H. *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*. Oxford, 1950.

McCormick, M. *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West*. Cambridge, 1986.

Meijer, F. *Emperors Don't Die in Bed*. London, 2004.

Merquior, J.G. *Rousseau and Weber: Two Studies in the theory of Legitimacy*. London, 1980.

Millar, F. *A Study of Cassius Dio*. Oxford, 1964.

Millar, F. *The Emperor in the Roman World: 31 BC – AD 337*. London, 1977.

Millar, F. *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337*. London, 1993.

Millar, F., Cotton, H.M. and Rogers, G. *Rome, the Greek World, and the East: Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire*, Chapel Hill, 2004.

Mitchell, S. *A History of the Later Roman Empire: AD 284-641*, Malden, 2007.

Mommsen, T. *A History of Rome under the Emperors*, edited by B. Demandt and A. Demandt, London, 1999.

Morgan, J. *Constantine: Ruler of Christian Rome*, New York, 2003.

Moulakis, A. 'Introduction.' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 1-7. New York, 1986.

Mousourakis, G. *A Legal History of Rome*, Abingdon, 2007.

Murvar, V. 'Introduction: theory of liberty, legitimacy and power: new directions in the intellectual and scientific legacy of Max Weber'. In *Theory of Liberty, Legitimacy and Power: New Directions in the Intellectual and Scientific Legacy of Max Weber*, edited by V. Murvar, pp. 1-7. London, 1985a.

Murvar, V. 'Patrimonialism, modern and traditionalist: a paradigm for interdisciplinary research on rulership and legitimacy. In *Theory of Liberty, Legitimacy and Power: New Directions in the Intellectual and Scientific Legacy of Max Weber*, edited by V. Murvar, pp. 40-85. London, 1985b.

Nicolet, C. *The World of the Citizen of Rome*, translated by P.S. Fulla, Berkeley, 1980.

Nixon, C.E.V. and B.S. Rodgers *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors*. Berkeley, 1994.

Nixon, C.E.V. 'Latin Panegyric in the Tetrarchic and Constantinian Period.' In *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* edited by B. Croke and A.M. Emmett, pp. 88-99. Sydney, 1983.

Noreňa, C. 'The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 91 (2001), pp. 146-168.

Novak, R.M. *Christianity and the Roman Empire: Background Texts*, Harrisburg, 2001.

Odahl, C.M. *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, New York, 2004.

Parker, H.M.D. *A History of the Roman World from AD 138 to 337*, London, 1935.

Paschoud, F. ed. and trans., *Zosime: Histoire Nouvelle Tome 1 (Livres I et II)*. Paris, 1971.

Peachin, M. *Roman Imperial Titulature and Chronology AD 235-284*. Amsterdam, 1990.

Petit, P. *Histoire Générale de l'Empire Romain: La Crise de I'Empire (Des Derniers Antonins à Dioclétien)*. Paris, 1974.

Pflaum, H.G. 'P. Licinius Gallienus nobilissimus Caesar et Imp. M. Aurelius Numerianus, à la lumière de deux nouveaux milliaires d'Oum-el-Bouaghi', in *Bulletin d'Archéologie Algérienne* 2 (1966).

Pohlsander, H.A. *The Emperor Constantine*. London, 1996.

Potter, D.S. *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395*. London, 2004.

Price, S. 'From Noble Funerals to Divine Cult: the Consecration of Roman Emperors,' in D. Cannadine and S. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, pp. 56-105. Cambridge, 1987.

Ramage, N.H. and A. Ramage, *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine*. London, 1995.

Rawlinson, G. *Parthia*, New York, 2007.

Rees, R. *Layers of Loyalty in the Latin Panegyric AD 289-307*.Oxford, 2002.

Rees, R. *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*. Edinburgh, 2004.

Rex, J. *Discovering Sociology: Studies in Sociological Theory and Method*, London, 1973.

Ridley, R. trans. and commentary, *Zosimus: A New History*. Canberra, 1982.

Rietbergen, P.J.A.N. *Europe: A Cultural History*, New York, 1998.

Rose, R. 'Dynamic Tendencies in the Authority of Regimes', *World Politics* XXI (4) (1969): pp. 602-628.

Rosen, F. 'Legitimacy: A Utilitarian View.' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 67-78. New York, 1986.

Rothschild, J. 'Political Legitimacy in Contemporary Europe.' In *Legitimation of Regimes: International Frameworks of Analysis*, edited by B. Denitch, pp. 37-54. London, 1979.

Roueché, C. *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*. London, 1989.

Rubin, Z. 'Dio, Herodian and Severus' Second Parthian War' *Chiron* 5 (1975), pp. 419-441.

Rubin, Z. *Civil-War Propaganda and Historiography*. Bruxelles, 1980.

Salway, P. *Roman Britain*. Oxford, 1981.

Sayles, W. *Ancient Coin Collecting III: The Roman World – Politics and Propaganda*, 2nd edition, Iola, 2007.

Schabert, T. 'Power, Legitimacy and Truth: Reflections on the Impossibility to Legitimise Legitimations of Political Order.' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 96-104. New York, 1986.

Shahîd, I. *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs*, Washington, 1984.

Shotter, D. *Rome and her Empire*. London, 2003.

Southern, P. *The Roman Empire From Severus to Constantine*. London, 2001.

Southern, P. *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History*. Santa Barbara, CA, 2006.

Spielvogel, J.J. *Western Civilization: to 1500 Volume 1*, Belmont, 2008.

Stobel, K. 'Strategy and Army Structure between Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great' in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, (Malden, MA., 2007).

Swain, S., Harrison, S., Harrison, S.J. And Elsner, J. *Severan Culture*, Cambridge, 2007.

Sykes, P. *A History of Persia*. London, 1951.

Syme, R. *Tacitus*. Oxford, 1958.

Syme, R. *Emperors and Biography*. Oxford, 1971.

Syme, R. 'The Son of the Emperor Macrinus'. *Phoenix*. Vol. 26, No. 3. Autumn, 1972, pp. 275-291.

Syme, R. *Historia Augusta Papers*. Oxford, 1983.

Talbert, R.J.A. *The Senate of Imperial Rome*. Princeton, 1984.

Taylor, J. *Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataeans*, London, 2002.

Temporini, H and Haase, W. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung*. Berlin, 1980.

The Digest of Justinian, edited by T. Mommsen, P. Krueger and A. Watson, Philadelphia, 1985.

Toher, M. 'The Earliest Depiction of Caesar and the Later Tradition'. In M. Wyke (ed.), *Julius Caesar in Western Culture*, (Malden, 2006), pp. 29-44.

Treggiari S. 'Divorce Roman Style: How Easy and How Frequent Was It'. In *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome*, edited by B. Rawson, pp. 31-46. Canberra, 1991.

Vagi, D.L. *Coinage and History of the Roman Empire*, Chicago, 2000.

Van Dam, R. *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*, Cambridge, 2007.

Varner, E. *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture*. Leiden, 2004.

Vasiliev, A. *History of the Byzantine Empire 324-1453: Volume 1*, Madison, 1952.

Versnel, H.S. *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph*. Leiden, 1970.

Wacher, J.S. *The Roman World: Volume 2*, London, 2002.

Wallace-Hadrill, A. 'The Emperor and His Virtues', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*. 1981. Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 298-323.

Watson, A. *Aurelian and the Third Century*. London, 1999.

Weaver P.R.C. 'The Status of Children in Mixed Marriages,' In *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*, edited by B. Rawson, pp. 145-169. London, 1986.

Weber, M. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*. Translated by A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons. Edited with an Introduction by T. Parsons. New York. 1947.

Weber, M. *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*. Tubingen, 1958.

Weber, M. *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, translated and introduced by H. P. Secher, London, 1962.

Weber, M. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich. New York, 1968.

Weber, M. 'Legitimacy, Politics and the State' in *Legitimacy and the State*, edited by W.Connelly, pp. 32-62. Oxford, 1984.

Weber, M. *Sociological Writings*. Edited by W. Heydebrant, New York. 1994a.

Weber, M. *Political Writings*. Edited by P. Lassman and R. Spiers, Cambridge. 1994b.

Weber, M. and S.N. Eisenstadt. *On Charisma and Institution Building*. Chicago. 1968.

Weber, M., D.S Owen, T.B. Strong and R. Livingstone, *The Vocation Lectures*, Indianapolis, 2004.

Weber-Schäfer, P. 'Divine Descent and Sovereign Rule: A Case of Legitimacy?' In *Legitimacy: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Florence June 3 and 4, 1982*, edited by A. Moulakis, pp. 87-95. New York, 1986.

Wells, C.M., *The Roman Empire*, Cambridge, MA, 1995.

Whitby, M. *Rome at War: AD 293-696*, Oxford, 2002.

White, C. *The Emergence of Christianity*, Westport, 2007.

Wiedemann, T.E. *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire*, London, 1999.

Williams, S. *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. London, 1985.

Yamawaki, N. 'Rethinking Weber's Ideal Types' in L. McFalls (ed.), *Max Weber's 'Objectivity' Reconsidered*, (Toronto, 2007), pp. 206-224.